


# **Paganini Of Genoa**

**Lillian Day**



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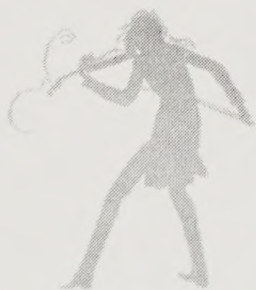






PAGANINI  
OF  
GENOA

*by*  
LILLIAN DAY



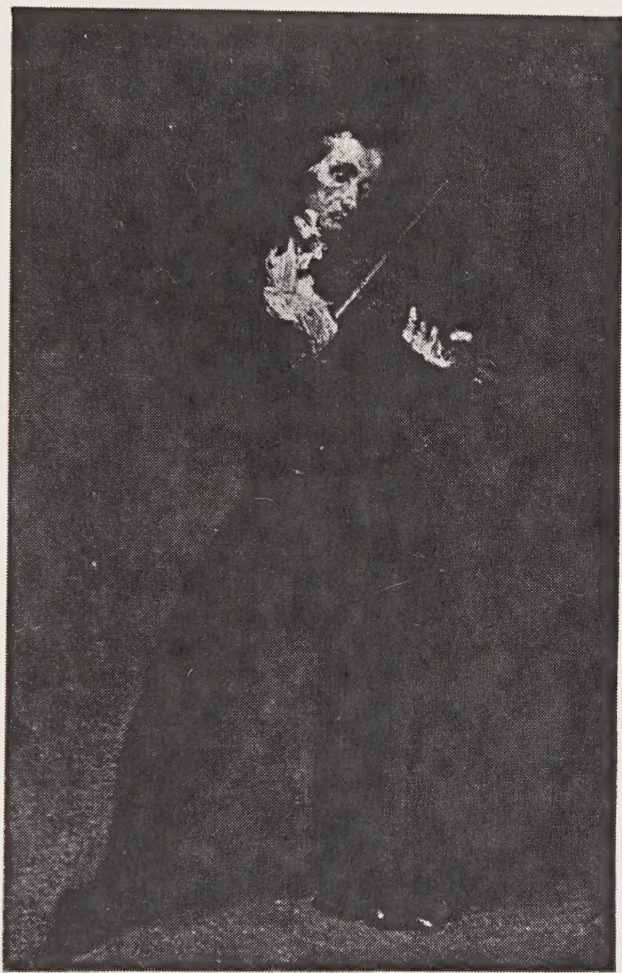
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NEW YORK

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NICOLO PAGANINI  
From the Portrait by Delacroix  
*(Phillips Memorial Gallery, Washington, D. C.)*



To  
LYON MEARSON





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*"Paganini avoids mediocrity in everything."*

—PAGANINI



## PART I — ITALY

### I

#### THE PAGANINI MYTH

NICOLÒ PAGANINI was so enwrapped in his G string and his intestine that he did not hear the cannon of Waterloo.

While General Bonaparte was making a kaleidoscope of the map of Italy, the greatest violin virtuoso of all time was traveling from Genoa to Modena, from Bologna to Ferrara, compromising princesses, impregnating peasants, and risking his precious Guarnerius on the color of a card. Empires and republics elbowed each other out of place; there was a revolution in industry, a recrudescence of philosophy, a renaissance of science, and Paganini scanned the newspapers for items about himself.

A musician could have the passion of Beethoven, the tenderness of Schubert, the wisdom of Brahms; he could have the brilliance of Liszt and the delicacy of Chopin, yet if his instrument were the bass drum or the bull fiddle, or if he were fat, he would not inspire poets to bad verse or women to forbidden love; baldness is the enemy of romance, and no young girl secretly pines to stroke cheeks puffed out by blowing a cornet. Nicolo Paganini had the pallor of a poor digestion, the bright eyes of fever; he was thin, had long black curls, and was said to be intimate with the devil. His instrument was the graceful violin. The ladies of five coun-

tries, therefore, found him diverting enough to leave their husbands, or even to make them study the fiddle.

The name Paganini invokes a sinister figure.

Paganini never walked on to a platform; he slid forward or glided in. He was not thin, but wraith-like, cadaverous, spectral. People lined the streets to watch him come from the theater and crossed themselves if he accidentally touched them. Even after his death he continued to inspire terror among good Catholics. When his body lay in the pest-house on the beach at Villefranche, the inhabitants were terrified by the sighing of a violin at night.

The Paganini myth, no stranger than the Paganini reality, became so much a part of the man that nearly a century after his death we associate him more with hell than with harmonics.

Each country in which he played identified him characteristically. In Paris he was a Cagliostro; in London, the prototype of Udolpho; in Germany, the Magician of the South. In Prague it was whispered that he was the Wandering Jew, and the Irish claimed he had reached their shores on the Flying Dutchman. Today a Viennese operetta makes him a Don Juan; a German novel, a homosexual.

It was not in the superstitious South but in enlightened Germany that most of the apocryphal tales achieved the dignity of print.

According to the *Berliner Tageblatt*, Paganini was the only man who entered the harem of the Grand Sultan. The *Leipziger Zeitung Für Die Elegante Welt* told the solemn story of a pale lady and her escort who disappeared after a concert in an equipage drawn by black horses whose eyes

flashed lightning. *The Lady's Magazine* of London carried a dialogue of Paganini's Faustian bargain, and innumerable stories of mysterious disappearances and unearthly melodies were passed from press to press. In *Florentine Nights* Maximilian regales the dying Maria with a tale of the violinist. It was at the Comedy Theatre in Hamburg that he had first heard Paganini, the house crowded with the "refined and cultured business world—a whole Olympus of bankers and similar millionaires, the gods of coffee and sugar, with their plump wife-goddesses, Junos of the Wandrahm and Aphrodites of Dreckwall. . . . When Paganini began to play, it seemed to be dark before my eyes. . . . The form of the master wrapped itself in gloomy shadows, from whose depths his music came wailing in the most cutting accents of sorrow. Only from time to time, as a little lamp which hung over him cast a feeble light on his features, could I see his pallid countenance, which still retained traces of youth. His garb was strange indeed—divided in two parts, one red, one yellow. Heavy fetters hung to his feet. Behind him grimaced a face whose physiognomy indicated a jovial, he-goat nature; and I saw long, hairy hands which seemed to belong to it, moving now and then on the strings of the violin which Paganini played, often guiding his hand, while a floating, applauding laugh accompanied the tones which welled forth more painfully, and as if bleeding, from the violin. . . . Tones in whose bottomless abyss there was neither comfort nor hope. . . . Ever and anon, when in the melodious torments of his piece, the *obligato* goat-laughter came bleating in. . . . My neighbor, the fur-dealer, said, 'Pity! pity! he has burst a string. That comes of his constant pizzicato!'

*Florentine Nights* has frequently been quoted as Heine's music criticism of Paganini!

For a digital dexterity which was not humanly possible, he had given Satan the majority of shares in his soul. That gentleman was seen, not only by Maximilian, but by a citizen of Vienna, standing at the violinist's shoulder and guiding his bow.

Taciturn and loquacious by turn, like most people, both his silence and his words were construed against him, as were his dark complexion and his wizardry on one string. It was even asserted by enthusiasts that he could play on a violin which had no strings at all.

The less superstitious attributed his unique talent to long years of imprisonment where a parsimonious jailor permitted him only one string. His incarceration, they said, was for the murder of his wife. When it was proven that he had had no wife, a mistress was substituted, or her lover. Skeptics denied that his Guarnerius was made of the wood of his father's coffin and Liszt vehemently contradicted the tale that the famous G string was made of his wife's intestine.

Paganini enjoyed the stories of his collusion with the devil as long as they enhanced his mysterious personality and increased the box office receipts. But when people began to give Satan the credit for a technique which had taken years of practice to achieve, his sense of justice to himself made him contradict the rumors. He explained the prison story on the grounds of mistaken identity and published a letter from his mother to prove that he was not the son of Satan. In Prague he engaged Professor Schottky to write the story of his life in an attempt to destroy the macabre legend about



himself and substitute therefor the pretty tale of a kindly musician who was good to his mother. Paganini has the distinction, therefore, of being not only the greatest virtuoso of the concert stage but the first one to hire a press agent.

A man of musical imagination, he was not content with the formal interpretation of his age. Bored by the perfection of his own technique, he sought refuge in the decadence of playing on one string that which required four, and with the snapping of the other three he broke the remaining bonds of classicism. Hated for his tricks and envied for their success, no performer has ever called forth such differences of opinion. Spohr despised him, Berlioz admired him; Vienna applauded, London hissed. Liszt, capturing the orchestra within the confines of the keyboard, Chopin, straining the spirit of Beethoven into a nocturne, were both irrevocably influenced by the playing of Paganini. Brahms and Schumann found his music worth transcription, and today his *Twenty-four Caprices* are two dozen *bêtes noires* to our greatest violinists. When we realize the tremendous strides the piano and the orchestra have made in the last century and then consider that violin technique has not advanced a step beyond the boy Paganini, we have something of his measure. Paganini's was the *reductio ad absurdum* of program music. His violin was now a heavenly harp and then a scolding hag. From the mewing of a cat to a tone so exquisite that it has no counterpart in spoken language, no note was unintentional.

He was a genius to some, a charlatan to others. It was well known that a man could not be both.

## II

### ITALY

IN the year 1782 Frederick the Great was at Sans Souci constructing an empire, and reflecting on what he should have said to Voltaire. Schiller was writing *Kabale und Liebe* and Goethe complaining of the cesspools of the world.

*The Critique of Pure Reason*, the year before, began the substitution of ethics for religion. Necker had published his *Compte Rendu*, Cornwallis surrendered at Yorktown, and Marie Antoinette given birth to a dauphin.

In 1782 Samuel Johnson bade farewell to Mrs. Thrale at Brighton, and Mozart married in Vienna. Haydn was half a century old, and Beethoven a boy of twelve.

*L'Honnête Homme* of the pseudo-classic period was pricking up his ears at the sound of guns which were aiming, not only at his life, but at his art.

The little kingdoms and duchies of Italy under Austrian, Spanish, and Papal rule had enjoyed tenuous peace and tenacious superstition for several decades. The Industrial Revolution might have been on another planet, instead of across the English Channel.

Ideas engendered by the encyclopedists in France sifted across the Alps, thinned and weakened by their journey, and stopped dead at the lower nobility. The Italian peasant raised his grapes in the old way, ate his bread and cheese, and



### A STREET IN GENOA

Young Nicolo played from door to door in his native city,  
undaunted by drippings from the wash overhead.



would not have read his own Beccaria if he had been able to read.

Goldoni, in his comedies, re-created the first half of the century, with its periwigs, its snuff boxes, its balconies and serenades. In the latter half of the century Italy re-created Goldoni, who had retired to enjoy the corruption of Versailles, and Alfieri's lofty and tiresome tragedies made a feeble appeal to "Italian manhood." It was a land of olives and mulberries, of ducal citadels and beggars' huts, of friars and bandits and gentlemen with white hands, of high mass and black mass, of secret orders and public disorders; an Italy like the second act of an *opéra bouffe* with a backdrop of a volcano painted against a summer sky.

It was a lotus-eating Italy in which Nicolo Paganini chanced to be born.

### III

#### GENOA

ON the crescent of the blue bay, outgrowing the great wall of Barbarossa, looms the "city of a thousand towers and twice a hundred churches."

*"Genova la superba!" "Genova l'amorosa!" "Genova l'indulgenta!"*

Tasso called it *"il Paradiso d'Italia,"* and Wagner wrote, "Never have I seen anything like this Genoa, majestic and original!" All the panegyrics that exist about Genoa can and have been applied to Venice, Florence, Naples, and Rome. Only the obloquies are peculiar to the Ligurian Babylon. "Sea without fish, mountains without trees, men without faith, women without shame!"

A Troubadour poet called the Genovese "people bristling with hate." Dante, the Florentine, wrote:

"Genoa! Men, alas, perverse in every way,  
With every foulness stain'd;  
Why are ye not from Earth forever spurn'd away?"

and Virgil:

"Like a true Ligurian born to cheat,  
At least when Fortune favours his deceit."



Marble was to be had for the digging, so the great merchants, busy being merchants, imported their architects, sculptors and painters from less prosperous cities.

Steep streets and stairways, narrow lanes and bridges spanning the deeper valleys, made Genoa the most picturesque of cities. Great baroque palaces of stone frowned down upon beautiful gardens whose florescence nullified the stench of the crazy narrow streets close by. The poor in Genoa were poorer than the poor in Naples, for in winter there was cold to fight as well as hunger.

Dominated by Germans, Neapolitans, Milanese, and French, fighting the Saracen without and Italian States nearby, and prey to the feuds of the Guelphs and the Ghibellines within, Genoa struggled through the centuries and became rich and self-satisfied.

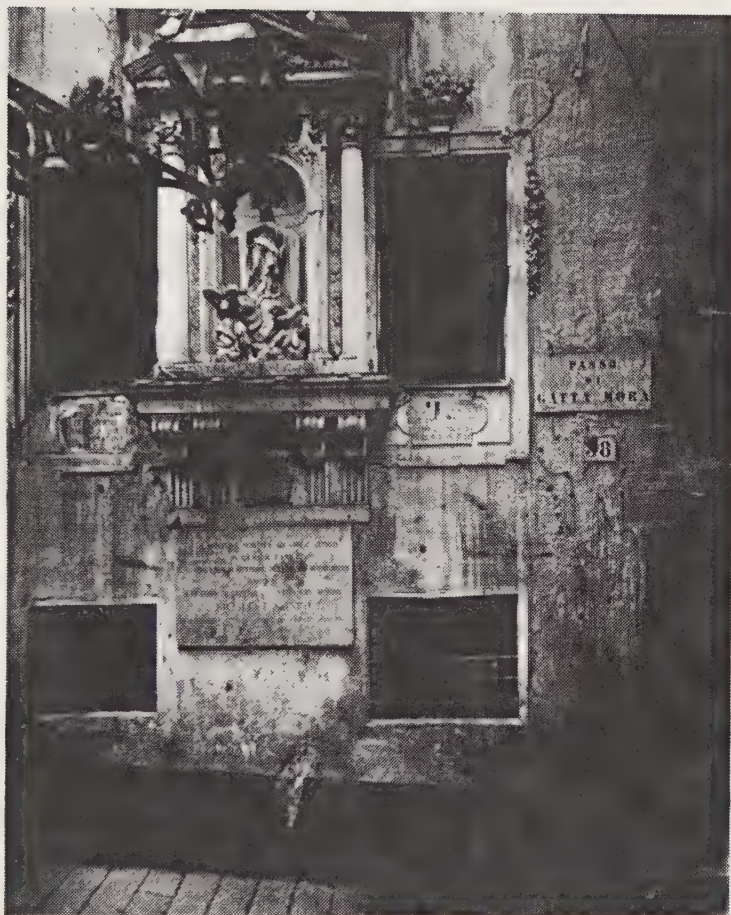
In the eighteenth century the culture of the Huguenots was diffused among the upper classes. A musical comedy revolution with the battle cry of "Long live the Virgin Mary" and a bonfire of the *Libro d'Oro* gave birth to Republicanism and the picturesque figures of the Italian *Risorgimento*.

The nobles and merchants, occupied with trade, married late in life and chose young brides. They faced the facts of life by engaging *cicisbei*, or "danglers", for their young wives, obviating the necessity of being deceived.

"The women of Genoa," says Francesco Lando, "were naturally frail, insinuating, complaisant, credulous and gossipy. Their veils, their fans, their balconies, and their sedan-chairs provided them with endless opportunities for the exhibition of personal charms and secret curiosity, and invited in return gallantries and compromises."

But it was not in a rococo villa that Nicolo Paganini made his mundane début. His mother was too tired to be unfaithful, and his birth was not inscribed in the *Libro d'Oro*; he was fully eleven before he associated with the nobility.

Near the Porta Soprana, past the house of Cristoforo Colombo, to the right, to the left, to the right again, through streets cleaned by the dripping of wash overhead, down a steep *salita*, out of the sunshine and into the Passage of the Dark Cat. There are three pink stone houses. In the one that contains the statue of the Virgin is the apartment in which Nicolo Paganini grew up. Over the doorway is a lamp which at night illuminates the alley in the manner of Rembrandt. The stone steps inside, too steep for little legs, are worn dangerously hollow in the center. Four flights is a long climb, but when one reaches the top and the door is opened, he is blinded by the Riviera sunshine which comes pouring in through the windows of the little three-room apartment. Here on the 27th of October, 1782, Nicolo Paganini was born. Most writers say it was 1784. It is probable that this error was established when the child artist made his début. It is more sensational for a little performer in black velvet trousers and a white *gilet* to be nine than eleven.



### PAGANINI'S BIRTHPLACE

The tablet reads: "High Venture Sprang From This Humble Place. In this house on October 28, in the year 1782, was born to the credit of Genoa and the delectation of the world, Nicolo Paganini, incomparable master in the divine art of sound."



## IV

### THE PASSAGE OF THE DARK CAT

**J**UST as German wives are primarily housekeepers and French wives business partners, so are Italian wives mothers. Whether there is one child or ten, from the moment that the first-born curls his lips around the voluminous and unashamed breast, the Italian peasant ends her existence and lives only vicariously.

The illiterate and superstitious Teresa Paganini, by her overwhelming love and tenderness, made it possible for Nicolo to endure the cruelty of "the hatefulest father in musical history."

Of the grandparents, little is known. There were a few musical and theatrical Paganinis during the eighteenth century but, had there been a relationship, Nicolo would have recorded it. The name Paganini, "the little pagan," is a common enough one in Italy.

Tony Paganini raised a family of four on the dribblings of a commerce that made the merchants around him wealthy and arrogant. As a clerk, a peddler, a street porter, he picked up enough to send his wife to the market. At one time he became a small dealer in cordage, canvas and other ship supplies. The poor man's bourse, the lottery, was the one hope of the Paganinis until Tony learned that there was something in the family to be exploited.

Regardless of financial conditions, there is always time for an Italian to sit in the sun and make a musical noise. In Tony's case it was the mandolin. He had no ear for music and playing off key did not disturb him in the least, nor any of the family except the bambino. Nicolo snapped his little fingers in time and winced when the pitch was false. He was cursed with such a sensitive ear that the church bells filled him with delight or made him cry with rage. This did not pass unnoticed by his father. He had heard of the fabulous sums earned by an infant named Mozart.

Pasteur had not yet made milk safe for infancy and Nicolo cut his first teeth on salami and bananas. Nobody had time to coax him to eat his green peas. He could take his spaghetti or leave it, and if he was hungry, he took it, regardless of the fact that the cat had been sitting on it for days. A delicate baby, this rubato feeding did not help to build up his constitution. At four years, after an attack of measles, he was given up for dead. For twelve hours he lay in a state of catalepsy. His mother draped him in a white shroud and his father drove the bargain for the little tufted coffin. An almost imperceptible movement of the hand saved Nicolo from premature burial. Perhaps it was the money set aside for the coffin that was used for the purchase of a little violin.

Daily, Tony made time to teach the child what little he knew of the mandolin, and when he was six Nicolo had also mastered the rudiments of violin playing.

Music is the one art which is no respecter of age. Children, with one or two exceptions, have written drivel, and there is little record of great painters or sculptors having accom-



plished anything before their teens. The history of music, however, tells a different story; Händel played the organ at seven and Bach stole his brother's music at ten. Baby Haydn was found outside the school house window, scraping two pieces of wood together in imitation of a violin. Beethoven's father would return from the tavern with a companion and rouse the child from sleep to play until dawn, and poor young Karl Maria von Weber was doomed to singing lessons almost before he could speak.

Nicolo was frequently informed that, at the age of six, Mozart had composed a difficult concerto with orchestral parts. This information was alternated with beatings.

His mother encouraged him in a more gentle manner by telling him of a dream she had had. He tells of this:

"The Saviour appeared to my mother in a dream and told her to ask some blessing of him. She begged that her son might become a great violinist, which grace was vouchsafed her."

Whether this dream actually occurred as a wish fulfillment, or whether Tessa regarded a lie in a good cause worth the candle of expiation, it had the desired effect, for young Nicolo practiced assiduously. He would play a passage over and over, with every known fingering, and then invent methods of his own. If there were times when the cries of his little friends on the street below rose above his arpeggios, or if his eyes strayed from the arch of his violin bridge out the window to the arch of the sky over the sparkling bay, his father curbed his childish desire by turning the key in the lock and by withholding food until a certain amount of practice had been accomplished. Some days the child would

work for ten hours at a stretch, falling on the bed exhausted at twilight. His reward was the approbation of his family and the admiration of his little friends. Nicolo had good reason, even then, to be a show-off.

When, in a few months, he had exhausted the paternal knowledge, he was taken to Giovanni Servetto, a violinist in a theater orchestra, and later to Giacomo Costa, *Maestro di Cappella* of the Cathedral of San Lorenzo. He defrayed the cost of tuition by playing in church and at parties. At the age of eight he performed a Pleyel concerto in church, and composed his first violin sonata, which, with his other infantile compositions, has been lost. For six months he took three lessons a week in theory from Gasparo Ghiretti. His progress was so phenomenal that his teachers dreaded the lessons. They never knew what disconcerting question he would ask. Through Costa he met Francesco Gnecco, a distinguished operatic composer, who became interested in the prodigy to the extent of introducing him to a circle of his musical friends. Sometimes Gnecco would come to the little flat in the *Passo di Gatta Mora*. He would find Renzo, the joiner, and his fat wife Francesca, Gianni, the locksmith, and his wife Chiora, with the silky moustache. Pietro, the tailor, sometimes joined his fiddle with Tony's mandolin. They would all listen to the bambino, and then Gnecco would give Tony advice about the boy and Tony would listen without hearing.

There is no record of Nicolo's having received any schooling. How he learned to read and write is unknown, but he did, for in later years he became a frequent contributor to the public press and a prolific letter writer, though there



is no indication of his having ever read a book. He learned to add, which he found useful on his concert tours. Perhaps some neighborhood priest taught the boy his alphabet, or perhaps his older brother. There is evidence that his mother could not read, and none that his father could.

He did not like sports, nor is it known that he was just a normal boy.

The race of musicians has never been celebrated for happiness. Sensitive and febrile, slave to internal scourgings, at best a musician's life is a compromise with the social conditions in which he finds himself. When he is surrounded by harshness and lack of understanding, the adjustment is almost too great to make. Paganini made it at the expense of his nervous system. From the time he attained his full growth, until his death, he was a dying man.

## V

### DEBUT

**L**UIGI MARCHESI, the most eminent male soprano of his time, and Teresa Bertinotti, a young singer, gave a recital in the old San Agostino Theatre, then the opera house of Genoa. They decided to add local talent, and Antonio Paganini was asked to allow his son to play. The singers promised in return to lend their aid to a recital to be given by the boy.

Nicolo tells of a day when he was dreaming down by the waterfront, absorbing through eyes, ears, and nose the life of the harbor. He had returned home anticipating a beating for having stayed away so long, but was greeted instead with the great news of his forthcoming public appearance.

When the night arrived, the long benches of the pit and the red plush boxes of the San Agostino were filled with Genovese of all classes. Nicolo gave no sign of his nervousness, but tuned his little Amati, which seemed to the audience almost as big as himself. Arching his wrist, he let the bow fall on the E string with the surety that later distinguished him from all other players. His selection was not a Bach fugue or a melody of Haydn or Tartini's famous Trill. Nicolo had chosen to play a set of his own variations on *La Carmagnole*. This was a revolutionary version of the old



THE THEATRE S. AGOSTINO IN GENOA  
Where Paganini made his debut at the age of eleven.



French song, *Malbrough s'en va-t-en guerre*, as well as the Piedmontese national air. It was well chosen. Genoa was in sympathy with the French Revolution, and the audience knew that the head of Citizen Louis Capet had just dropped into a basket in the Place de la Révolution.

The house stamped and shouted, "*bis, bis,*" and would not be satisfied until the little boy had played again and again. His mother cried and straightened his frill, and his father strutted back and forth behind the scenes. Bertinotti kissed the child, and everyone out front was buzzing about his age—which was eleven, and not nine. Nicolo himself was detached from all this. From the moment that he had struck the first note, there had entered into him that current which passes only over footlights, which exists between an authentic artist and his audience, the thing that makes one man into another, and that in later years made Paganini rise trembling from a sick bed and turn into a man of bronze. It is a strange feeling for the husband, the wife, the mother of an artist to sit in a darkened auditorium and see the familiar face, the beloved hands, the shoes touched only that morning; to see these things possessed by a stranger.

When a card was brought back to the dressing room, the new little Nicolo glanced at it and handed it to his father. Teresa waited to be told.

"It is the Marchese di Negro; he wants Nicolino to have supper with him at the palace. His carriage is waiting in the *Strada*. I shall go with him. I think you had better go home with the children, my dear."

Teresa was already curling Nicolo's locks about her finger.

"Don't eat too many sweets," she said; "and be sure to bow to his lordship," and then in a more intimate tone, "Come, I'd better take you first to the toilet."

## VI

### TEACHERS

IT was at Villa di Negro, on the Salita Santa Caterina, that Kreutzer heard Nicolo play a few years later. The boy had been studying with Costa for two years and breaking the violinistic conventions of his teacher. When he found he had mastered old difficulties he invented new ones, and if he could not win a point by argument he could prove it by pragmatism.

Two years had taught Nicolo many things beside the violin. He knew that rich ladies didn't cook or scold, but smelled sweet and made arch remarks to young men who kissed their drooping white hands. It was the little Amati that had opened palace gates, like the magic words in fairy tales. It was the Amati that had brought him sweets such as no other child in the Passo di Gatta Mora had ever tasted.

He had given his own concert, assisted by the two singers, and had achieved another success playing *La Carmagnole*. The long Reign of Terror had come and gone. Marat had been stabbed, "stewing in his slipper bath," and Robespierre and his adherents had gone the way of all patriot flesh.

Tony Paganini was Nicolo's first unscrupulous manager. Shortly before the boy's second appearance the following notice appeared in a newspaper:—



July 25th, 1795, Nicolo Paganini of Genoa, a boy already known to his country for his skill in handling the violin, having determined to study at Parma to improve his talents, under the direction of the renowned Signor Rolla, but lacking the means to do so, has adopted this plan and has taken courage to beg his compatriots to contribute toward this object, inviting them to come to this entertainment for his benefit.

Funds were raised and the thirteen-year-old boy, in the company of his father and the Marchese di Negro, set out first for Florence and then for Parma to see the great Alessandro Rolla, chamber virtuoso and director of concerts at the Court. Pat phrases and linguistic handles were as popular as they are today, and Rolla was known as "The Pride of Italy." But though he has over a hundred and fifty compositions mentioned in the Catalogue of the Milan Conservatory, he is known to us today only as the teacher of Paganini. Paganini published the story years later:

"On arriving at Rolla's house we found him ill and in bed. His wife conducted us into a room adjoining the one where the sick man lay, in order to concert with her husband who, it appeared, was not at all disposed to receive us. Perceiving upon the table of the chamber into which we were ushered a violin, and the last concerto of Rolla, I took up the violin and played the piece at first sight. Surprised at what he heard, the composer inquired the name of the virtuoso he had just heard; when he heard it was a mere lad, he would not give credence to the fact unless by ocular demonstration. Thus satisfied, he told me that he could teach me nothing, and recommended me to take lessons in composition from Paër."



"The evident desire evinced by Paganini," says Fétis, "to refute the supposition of his having received lessons from Rolla was singularly difficult to account for. Gervasoni, who knew him at Parma at this period, affirms that he was the pupil of Rolla for several months."

Paganini admits his indebtedness to Costa, to Ghirreti and to Paër. Why does he deny Rolla? Why will a woman admit to a number of lovers and emphatically deny her relations with a certain one?

For six months Nicolo received three lessons weekly in harmony and counterpoint from Gasparo Ghirreti, violinist and composer, chamber musician to Prince Ferdinand of Parma. At the same time he applied himself to the study of instrumentation.

Fernando Paër spent a part of each year at Parma and Nicolo, under his direction, composed a duet which pleased his teacher greatly, and possibly sketched the *Twenty-four Caprices*.

These pieces reveal a wealth of musical lore and a poetic quality which unfortunately is little known today because so few violinists are able to play them.

"Ghirreti," says Paganini, "who had taken a fancy to me, overwhelmed me with lessons in composition and under his guidance I composed a great deal of instrumental music. About this time I played two violin concerti at a concert in the leading theater, after having played at the country seat of the Sovereigns at Colorno and at Sala, on which occasion I was most generously compensated."

Frequent discussions took place between him and Rolla on the innovations of technique which the boy had begun

to introduce. The arguments were the forerunners of the great battle against classicism, in which Paganini took such an important part.

When Nicolo was fifteen, he was "hawked about the country on a professional tour." Under his father's surveillance he visited the principal cities of Lombardy, from which Napoleon had just driven the Austrians. Breaking all rules of art, just as his predecessor had broken all rules of military strategy, young Paganini gave concerts at Milan, Bologna, Florence, Pisa, and Leghorn, creating a sensation in each place. While the boy was on the platform, the old man remained in the box office.

After his return to Genoa, Nicolo finished the *Caprices* and found that he had composed music of such difficulty that he was unable to play it himself except after long hours of concentrated study. He would try the same passage in a hundred different ways until he was overcome with fatigue. He mastered obstacles which were considered insurmountable by his contemporaries. He studied the works of Corelli, Vivaldi, Tartini, Pugnani, and Viotti. It was this rigid self-training in his youth which enabled him in his prime to give concert after concert without practicing a note.

Realizing his capacity for earning money, his father's discipline became more irksome than ever, and Nicolo sought a way to escape it. The opportunity offered itself in the shape of the Festival of St. Martin.



**FERDINANDO PAER**

The most famous of Paganini's teachers. Later he introduced Paganini at the Court of Louis Philippe.



## VII

### GAMBLING

" . . . the green forest-walk on the wall—  
With the Apennine blue through the trees;  
. . . and the palaces, churches and all  
The great pictures that burn out of these."

E. B. BROWNING.

THE ancient city of Lucca in Lombardy has been pawned, sold, ceded, surrendered, and impoverished by tributes to first one lord and then another. Visigoths, Huns, Vandals, Ostrogoths, and Franks have plundered the face of Italy, but it was the Longobards, "a most foul and stinking race," according to an ancient chronicler, who gave their name to the fertile plain in which the Lucchesi still gather olives for their famous oil.

Travelers have found tranquillity in Lucca. Montaigne enjoyed the baths for several months, but found society a little slow as "most of the men were apothecaries." Shelley's boat drifted down the Serchio, Byron rested a while in a cool green villa at the Bagni, and Ruskin feasted his eyes on the monument of Llarra in the Duomo.

It was at Lucca that the face of Gentucca at a window made Dante forget Beatrice for a day, and it was at Lucca that Nicolo forgot the Passo di Gatta Mora in the sweet

intoxication of liberty and excess. This was in the year 1799, when Europe was even more unsettled than usual. The darling of France had come home from Egypt, and an Anglo-Russo-Austrian coalition was, by a series of battles, driving the French back to their own soil.

Despite this, the Festival of St. Martin in November drew musicians, music lovers, pilgrims, and mountebanks to Lucca from all parts of Europe. Nicolo asked his father's permission to go there to perform. With his mother's co-operation he succeeded in persuading Tony to allow him to go under the guardianship of his brother, Luigi, known later as "Doctor" Paganini because he dealt in rare violins.

Nicolo was seventeen when he went out on his journey, fortified by a control over nothing but his violin. He did not tell his mother that he had no intention of returning. Why make a scene?

The boy filled the houses and his pockets and, with no apparent apprenticeship and with an imperceptible transition, entered the first rank of violinists. From an infant prodigy he became a performer of distinction and maturity. The effervescent Italians, gathered together to shout and shut out the rumble of the war, were charmed by the slim youth who could make the violin cry. The story of his triumphs went from theater to café, from café to church, from church to piazza. Everybody had to hear the Paganini.

He sent Luigi home primed with tales of his success, and money for the family. He paid no attention to his father's entreaties to return and Tony had to content himself with the money he could extort from his son by mail.

Conditions had not changed greatly since John Evelyn



had stopped at the Romanesque walled city two centuries before.

"'Tis also cheape living, which causes travellers to set up their rest here more than in Florence, tho' a more celebrated City; besides, the ladys here are very conversable, and the religious women not at all reserv'd."

With Mediterranean maturity Nicolo availed himself of any lack of reservation that came his way, became tipsy with students and artists, made friends of cavaliers with cards up their sleeves. He visited Pisa, Arezzo, and Leghorn, alternating concerts with card games.

Between the demands from home and the attraction of the gaming table he was in perpetual debt, a condition which did not disturb one who could retrieve his losses by a melody.

He was on friendly terms with all the money lenders and, when his jewelry gave out, he sometimes found it necessary to pawn his Stradivarius.

"I shall never forget," said he, "that I one day placed myself in a position which was to decide my future. The Prince of . . . had, for some time, coveted the possession of my violin—the only one I possessed at that period, and which I still have. He, on one particular occasion, was extremely anxious that I should mention the sum for which I would dispose of it; but, not wishing to part with my instrument, I declared that I would not sell it for two hundred and fifty gold napoleons. Some time after that the Prince said to me that I was, doubtless, only speaking in jest in asking such a sum, but that he would be willing to give me two thousand francs. I was, at this moment, in the greatest want of money to meet a debt of honor I had in-

curred at play, and was almost tempted to accept the proffered amount, when I received an invitation to a party that evening at a friend's house. All my capital consisted of thirty francs, as I had disposed of all my jewels, watch, rings, and brooches, &c. I resolved on risking this last resource; and, if Fortune proved fickle, to sell my violin to the Prince and to proceed to St. Petersburg, without instrument or luggage, with view to re-establishing my affairs; my thirty francs were reduced to three, and I fancied myself on the road to Russia, when suddenly my fortune took a sudden turn; and, with the remains of my capital I won a hundred and six francs. This amount saved my violin, and completely set me up. From that day I abjured gambling—to which I had sacrificed part of my youth—convinced that a gamester is an object of contempt to all well-regulated minds.”

Paganini always stood on the other side of the footlights, looking at himself. He stopped gambling because he was convinced that “*a gamester is an object of contempt to all well-regulated minds.*”



## VIII

### VIOLINS

THE evolution of the violin has been called "the survival of the loudest."

This is one of those charming statements which should not be submitted to analysis. Italy's proportion of great violinists is equaled by her preponderance of great violins and the success of every great player is inevitably associated with an equally famous instrument.

The violin was the first musical instrument to attain perfection, though its origin is as elusive as one of its own high notes. In the bas-reliefs of the Greeks and Romans, and on their terra cotta vases, are found harps, lyres, citharas, flutes. In the records of the Egyptians and Chaldeans one discovers instruments which can be reasonably construed to be the ancestors of our modern brasses and wood-winds, but the search for the first fiddle is vain. In the Book of Daniel the word "viol" occurs, but there is no reason to believe that it was anything more than a term used by the translators for some stringed instrument that was plucked.

It is possible that the *ravanastron* of ancient India was the humble ancestor of our violin. It was named after its inventor, the musical king, Ravana, and consisted of a hollow cylinder of sycamore wood, open on one side and on the other covered with a piece of serpent's skin, forming the

sound board. From the middle of this cylinder extended a long, bent rod of deal which served as the neck and finger-board, in which two pegs were inserted. The strings stretched over a tiny bridge and were fastened at the lower end. A bow of the primitive arch type, consisted of hair, roughly fastened to a bamboo stick with rush string. Some time later this instrument appeared in China as the *r'jeenn*, examples of which are still in existence.

While there is doubt as to the origin, and controversy over the development, there is but one opinion about the perfection of the most sensitive of musical instruments.

The little city of Cremona in Lombardy produced the three great families of violin makers—the Amati, the Guarneri, and the Stradivari.

Some attribute the secret of Cremona to a wood which cannot now be obtained; others, to a varnish. Charles Reade says:

The lost secret is this: The Cremona varnish is not a varnish, but two varnishes; and those varnishes heterogenous; that is to say, first the pores of the wood are filled, and the grain shown up by two, by three, and sometimes, though rarely, by four, coats of fine oil-varnish with some common but clear gum in solution. Then upon this oil varnish, when dry, is laid a heterogenous varnish; viz., a solution of spirit of some sovereign, high coloured, pellucid, and, above all, tender gum.

The instruments of Stradivarius are accurate and scientific. They were measured according to the rules which their maker had discovered to be the best. Guarnerius, on the other hand, never took accurate measurements. His violins

were really made by ear, his F holes slashed almost at random, but he must have possessed a genius beyond understanding, because his violins have such an exquisite tone that there are many players who prefer them even to the Stradevarii.

"The names of Amati and Stradivarius," says Hart, "became familiar to the musical world gradually, Guarnerius, in the hands of a Paganini, came forth at a bound. This illustrious violin was often credited with the charm which belonged to the performer; the magical effects and sublime strains that he drew forth from it must, it was thought, rest in the violin. Every would-be violinist, whose means permitted him to indulge in the luxury, endeavored to secure an instrument by the great Guarnerius. The demand thus raised brought forth those gems of the violinmaker's art now in the possession of wealthy amateurs and a few professionals. When the various works of the gifted Guarnerius were brought to light, much surprise was felt that such treasures should have been known only to a handful of obscure players, chiefly in the churches of Italy. The violin used by Paganini belongs to the last period of the great maker, and, consequently, is one of those bold and massive instruments of his grandest conception, but lacks the beautiful finish of the middle period. The connoisseurs of those days had associated Joseph Guarnerius with the violin of the type of Paganini's only; their surprise was great when it was discovered that there were three distinct styles in the works of Guarnerius, one evidencing an artistic grandeur, together with a high finish, but little inferior to those of Antonius Stradivarius."

It has been said that Paganini's bow was much longer than that ordinarily used, but that is no more true than the statement that his fingers were extraordinarily long. He used a Tourte bow, the highest development in that implement.

Dr. Luigi Paganini was a fiddle fancier. He possessed "a violin ornamented with mother-o'-pearl and ebony, which had belonged to a Shah of Persia, the favorite violin of Lord Byron (so it was said), one that had belonged to Stanislaus of Poland, father-in-law of Louis XV., one that had been played upon by Charles IV. of Spain, the enthusiast who had quartet performances at six in the morning, and who scorned to keep time."

Nicolo acquired many valuable instruments, in one way or another, on his travels. In his concert announcements he always volunteered to execute any piece of music which might be presented to him.

A Parmesian artist and amateur of the violin, named Pasini, read the announcement and brought Paganini a concerto in manuscript, containing passages that were regarded as almost impossible of execution, even after practice. Pasini brought his own violin for the experiment.

"This instrument shall be yours if you can play this concerto at sight in a masterly manner."

"If that is the case," Paganini replied, "you can say good-bye to it."

He further tells us that his exquisite performance threw Pasini into ecstatic admiration. This violin was the Stradivarius which he subsequently nearly lost to the prince. It had other adventures. At Leghorn it acted as a decoy for the famous Guarnerius which is now under glass at the Municipi-



**THE GUARNERIUS, 1742 (*Left*)**

Was Paganini's favorite violin. He never left it out of his sight and was in a state of agitation while it was being repaired. It is now preserved under glass at the Municipio in Genoa.

**THE STRADIVARIUS, 1724 (*Right*)**

Was his second fiddle. It, at one time, became the property of Nicolini. Only the head and belly are original.





pal Museum in Genoa, and which was the favorite of all Paganini's violins. It bears the inscription:—

JOSEPH GUARNERIUS FECIT  
CREMONE ANNO 1742 IHS (2)

This Guarnerius del Gesù was not the celebrated Joseph, son of Andrea, but his cousin and probable pupil. His work bears no resemblance to that of the Stradivarius family, but is a development rather of the school of Gaspard di Salo. Guarnerius del Gesù's violins can be divided into three epochs. In the second period he produced some of the finest specimens of his art. The last period, to which the violin of Paganini belongs, is a bolder one. "They are massively constructed, and have in them material of the finest acoustic properties. The sound-hole loses the pointed form so much associated with Guarnerius; the purfling is embedded, the edges heavy, the corners somewhat grotesque, the scroll has a mixture of vigor, comicality, and majesty, which may force a smile and then a frown from the connoisseur. . . . The head of a thoroughbred English mastiff, if carved might give some idea of the appearance."

Reade says of these instruments: "Such is the force of genius, that I believe in our secret hearts we love these impudent fiddles best, they are so full of *chic*."

In this period Guarnerius spent some time in prison, where it is said, the jailor's daughter brought him material with which to work. There are some violins of rougher construction which are known as the "prison Josephs."

Some years later at Leghorn, while his violin was being

tenderly guarded by a pawnbroker, Paganini was put to the necessity of borrowing a violin for his concert from a Monsieur Livron, a French merchant. He played a Viotti concerto with his usual brilliance. When the concert was concluded, Paganini brought the violin back to its owner who, it seems, exclaimed:

“Never will I profane the strings which your fingers have touched; it is to you that my violin now belongs.”

In a similar manner Paganini made an interesting collection of valuable instruments.



## IX

### AGRICULTURE, GUITAR AND LADY

THE turn of the century found Napoleon again in Italy. In 1800 "*l'enfant chéri de la victoire*," Masséna, kept twenty-five thousand Austrians out of Genoa for his chief. The sufferings of the family in the Passage of the Dark Cat during the siege were somewhat mitigated by the contributions of the younger son. In June the Battle of Marengo recovered all Italy for the French at a stroke.

We find Nicolo, with naïve wisdom, taking not the slightest interest in political affairs. He squandered not only his money but his talent. A Swedish bassoonist found himself in the unfortunate position of not having any music sufficiently difficult to tax his capacity. Nicolo took an afternoon off to supply the want and earn everlasting gratitude. On September the 14th he was again in Lucca for the Festival of St. Croix. Once more he sees himself from across the foot-lights.

"Everybody stared at me and made fun of my long bow and heavy strings, but after the rehearsal I was so wildly applauded that the other candidates did not venture to be heard. At a grand evening service in a church my concerto created such a furore that the worshippers rushed out to keep the crowd outside the church quiet."

There is a similar story of monks rushing out of their

stalls to quiet the mob attracted to a monastery by Paganini's violin.

For the next three years Nicolo disappeared completely from the public consciousness. A Tuscan lady of rank fell in love with him and took him to her chateau in the mountains where, for three years, he devoted himself to love and agriculture, for which her ample domain afforded good opportunity. He forsook his violin completely, at the behest of the lady, who wanted no reminder of the past. She substituted the guitar, her favorite instrument and one on which she herself played. She did Nicolo a greater service than she knew. The wire strings and the long stretches of the guitar developed his fingers as no amount of violin practice could have done. His musical inventiveness soon created difficulties which the lady could not surmount. Soon he became as great a virtuoso on the guitar as he was on the fiddle.

The fruits of this liaison were many sonatas, solo minuets, and duets for violin and guitar. While Paganini found the guitar unsatisfactory as an instrument of musical expression, he found it useful in composition. He was able to experiment with accompaniment as well as melody. In his last days at Nice he was never without it.

Research has never disclosed the lady's name. That she was rich and of high enough rank to defy convention is evident. She was undoubtedly older than Nicolo and of a forceful personality. To succeed in isolating a boy of twenty from the pleasures of the world for three years is indeed a *tour de force*.

The dedication of his compositions of this period indicate that he called her "Dida." It is true that one minuet is dedi-

cated to the gentle Signora Emiglia di Negro and two other minuets are indited to Signora Marina, but the name Dida occurs most frequently and, often accompanied by such evidential phrases as: "Sighing is not good for one." "Minuet that goes calling Dida." "Signora Dida from her obedient servant and implacable friend."

On the back of the *A Flat Minuet*, dedicated to Dida, is found the following:—

"Sighing is useless. Jaundice makes me so weak that Dr. Botti has forbidden me to play. Patience for a few days. . . . Will I then be happy? Patience . . . the days pass. I shall gain strength and I shall show you that I really am your entirely obedient servant and your friend, Nicolo Paganini."

To a sensitive being still quivering from the danger of adolescence, a poor constitution and a nature given to excesses, this span of three years, free from financial worry, from the tension of public appearance and the unwholesomeness of constant traveling, was probably a salvation. The regular meals, the pure mountain air and the constancy to one woman unquestionably built up a resistance against the ravages of disease and adventure which were in store for him.

With the thoughtlessness of youth and the ruthlessness of the artist, Paganini took advantage of Dida's hospitality just as long as he needed it, and not a day longer. He referred to it as the Call of Art. "Intellectual passion drives away all lusts," wrote Leonardo. It does indeed, when the lust has subsided.

What particular incident was the immediate cause of

Nicolo's departure, how he broke the news to Dida, and what she did after he left, must remain unknown. Perhaps she raved with Florentine frenzy, or bore her sorrow with dignified resignation. Perhaps she was a little relieved. All we know is that Paganini, wiser in the knowledge of woman, broader in musical resource, and better in health, tucked his violin under his arm and set out on the road to the world.

He returned to Genoa for a short interlude between adventures. He gave lessons to young Caterina Calcagno, who for a time astonished Italy with her Paganini-like technique. She suddenly dropped out of hearing about 1816, possibly when she married.

Paganini devoted this period to study and made the most significant discovery in his career as a composer, the discovery of Locatelli. Gluck, Haydn, Mozart, had formed the foundation of his musical understanding—Viotti, Pugnani, and Kreutzer, had left him unsatisfied—but it was Locatelli who gave definition to the ideas with which the young composer had been experimenting.

Paganini is the musical descendant of Corelli, via Locatelli. In *L'Arte De Nuova Modulazione*, which the French, with their flair for *le mot juste*, translate into *Caprices Enigmatiques*, this composer is generally conceded to have shattered tradition by inventing new combinations in tuning the violin, in double stops, arpeggios, and harmonics, or flageolet tones.

Locatelli's musical progenitor was Nicolaus Adam Strungk, a German who went to Italy to study in the seventeenth century, and who "put the strings of his violin out of tune and improvised, using the dissonances of the open

string." Paganini later brought these tricks to such perfection that the superstitious suspected diabolical complicity.

He wrote three quartets for violin, viola, guitar, and cello, and a set of Bravura variations for violin with guitar accompaniment, before setting out on tour.

## X

### PRINCESS ELISE

SOME of man's greatest works of art have resulted from frustrated love, and philanthropy, politics, and religion owe their debt of gratitude to ugly, hence unsatiated, women.

The oldest sister of Napoleon was "ill-made; her bones were square and prominent and her limbs seemed tacked to her body as it happened."

Marianne Elise was six years older than Paganini. She had been a King's Scholar at St. Cyr. When that exclusive school was disbanded by revolutionists, Napoleon took her and her acquired mannerisms back to Ajaccio. At Marseilles we find her standing in rags in the bread line, and later, when her brother obtained a pension for his family, we find her and the beautiful Pauline committing "indiscretions." Her matrimonial advances to one M. Rabassin, a soap boiler of Nice, were rejected. She succeeded later in marrying, none too soon, they say, Pascale Baciocchi, a distinguished looking Corsican of no importance.

Her first son, Napoleone, died at the age of one, and Elise moved into Lucien's old hotel on the rue Verte. During the pregnancy of the latter's wife she presided at the Hotel de Brissac, and later in her own house on the Faubourg St. Germain.

Enhanced by these settings and hitching her chariot to





PRINCESS ELISE BACIOCCHI

Sister of Napoleon. Paganini's official relation to her was as Court musician and captain of the Royal Gendarmerie.

*(Portrait by J. Kriehuber.)*





the family rising star, Elise created a salon of young poets and old politicians. She gave a dinner to introduce Napoleon to the beautiful Madame Récamier. "Elise's house," wrote Leclerc to Lucien, "is a tribunal to which authors come to be judged." Chateaubriand, Fontain, Esmenard, de Barante, La Harpe, and the unfortunate Duc d'Enghien were among her sincerest flatterers. Fouché was her confidant. It was inevitable that she should found a ladies' literary society.

"Madame Baciocchi,"—according to Madame Junot's account of her own wedding day—"was attired with a degree of eccentricity which is even now fresh in my mind. She had presided that morning over a ladies' literary society; and, since she proposed to establish a distinguishing costume for the associates, she decided that the best way to carry out her intentions was to have a model made and appear in it herself; and in that costume she afterwards came to my mother's house. Her head-dress consisted of a muslin veil, embroidered with different coloured silks and gold thread, twisted around her head, while a wreath of laurel in the fashion of Petrarch and Dante was perched on top of it. She wore a very long tunic and below it a skirt with a half train; very short, or, I think, no sleeves, and an immense shawl arranged in the manner of a cloak. Her toilet was a model of the Jewish, Greek, Roman—everything, in short, except French good taste. To see Madame Baciocchi thus attired was not surprising since we were accustomed to her eccentricities; it was impossible to resist the ludicrous impression she created by announcing her intention of offering such a dress to the adoption of all good Christians."

In addition to hating Josephine, Elise annoyed Napoleon

by appearing in the Bois in a scarlet cashmere riding habit and in amateur theatricals in pink tights.

In 1803 Napoleon caused Baciocchi to be elected a senator with a salary of twenty-five thousand francs, in order to relieve the army of him; and two years later he conferred the title of Princess of Piombino on a sister who was too much like him to be comfortable at St. Cloud. He granted her a *gratification extraordinaire* of a hundred and fifty thousand francs for the expenses of the journey. Her cortège included a chamberlain, a *dame d'honneur*, two ladies in waiting, a physician, four maids, a *maître d'hôtel*, eight servants, and two couriers. At Turin she had an audience with the Emperor, the result of which made her dispatch Baciocchi to Piombino, while she accompanied her brother to Milan.

The little republic of Lucca had expressed a wish that a member of the imperial family be sent to rule it. They had had the bad taste to request a prince rather than a princess, but Elise knew that the stuffed uniform who was her husband would be merely a nominal ruler. Her importunities finally prevailed, and Baciocchi became a Most Serene Highness.

Since in Italy the name Pascale is synonymous with "fool" and since Elise feared that the cap and bells might fit, she made her husband change his name to rhyme with hers. The husband of Elise became Félice, "the sweetest name that ever love grew weary of."

She celebrated July 14th by making a Napoleonic entry into the tranquil town, whose Duomo raised its tower above medieval bastions and venerable trees. Added to her original cavalcade were twenty-five state coaches from France and

four splendid horses, the gift of the Emperor. Félice, who was a better violinist than horseman, mounted his charger, with whom he vied in trappings, just outside the city gates. The Lucchesi rubbed their eyes and wondered if the Arabian Nights had come to pass.

Elise's process of sublimation took the form of trying to make Lucca a miniature Paris. She rebuilt the palace and gathered about her a court, much as Julius Cæsar had done in the same city. She demolished houses and churches to form the Piazza Napoleone, remodeled charitable institutions and founded an Academy of real importance. She threw business in the way of the big marble quarries of Carrara, by ordering innumerable statues and busts of the family. She struck medal after medal and was only prevented from substituting "Napoleone" for "God" on one of them by the former's modesty. She even found time to design a green and gold costume for the senators, and to have a baby. She tried to alleviate her disappointment in the child's sex by naming her Napoleone and by making her as masculine as one can make a girl child.

Leaving the city by the Porta Santa Maria, one comes to the Villa Marlia, where Elise expressed herself to the extent of half a million francs, while vociferously lamenting her poverty. She succeeded in destroying its mellow charm by mowing down stately shrubbery to obtain the dull and fashionable English lawns. She turned the course of the Fraga to obtain water for her fountains and installed a menagerie of wild beasts. Only a baroque nympheum behind the palace, fine rusticated walls, and a large balustraded pool,

guarded by river gods, remained to give some suggestion of what had been.

This villa was Elise's retreat from a social pressure of her own making. She tried to recreate the glory of her days in the Faubourg, but in Italy she had only the second line of celebrities from which to draw. She had a taste rather than a talent for political intrigue, but her thirst for knowledge was sincere and her admiration of the arts constructive and intelligent.

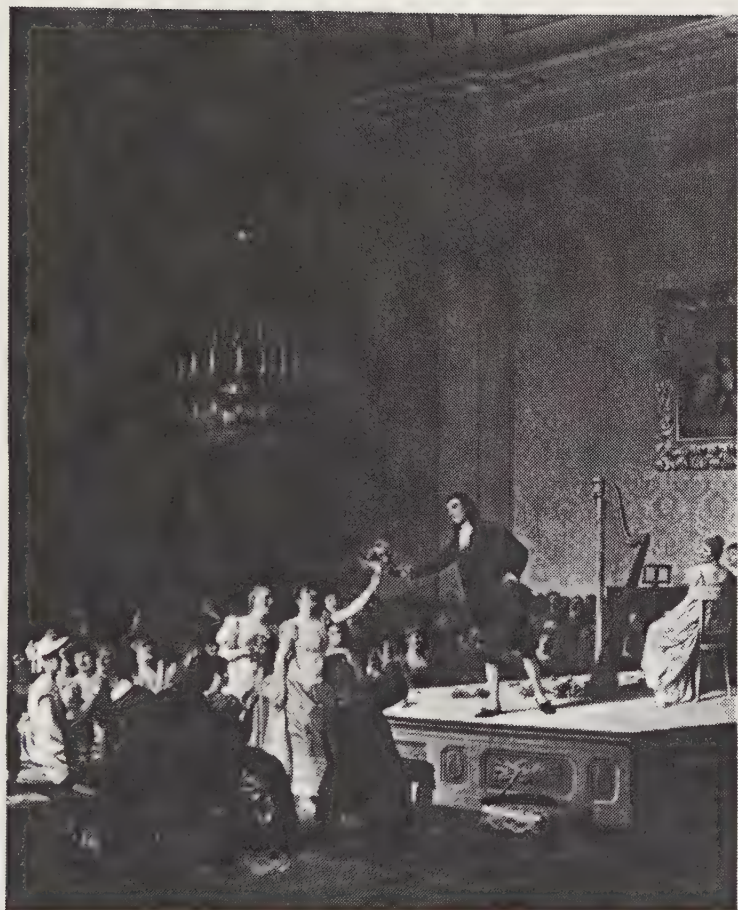
The fame of young Paganini had reached her and when, in September, he came to play at Lucca, she pounced upon him and had him appointed director of the court orchestra. Félice's playing ceased to be a nuisance, and Elise arranged to have him take lessons from the great violinist.

She made Paganini Captain of the Royal Body Guard, not because she regarded his frail form in the light of a protector, but because the exigencies of etiquette debarred a mere musician from certain court functions. This office carried with it the privilege of wearing a uniform on state occasions, and Nicolo loved to dress up.

In an age when genius was pampered by royalty, Paganini became the court's pet. He conducted the orchestra three times a week, playing his own confections to adoring audiences. Beethoven never permitted a work of his to be heard by the public until he had gone over every note, polished and rewritten it for months, sometimes years. Paganini's pieces were tried out the day of their inception. Composing became a parlor trick, and the less time he had, and the fewer strings at his disposal, the greater the achievement.

"My duties require me to play in two concerts each week





SCENE AT AN EARLY PAGANINI CONCERT  
*(Galli, 1804)*





and I always improvise with piano accompaniment. I write this accompaniment in advance and work out my theme in the course of the improvisation. One day at noon the court required a concerto for violin and English horn that evening; the musical director refused on the ground that there was not sufficient time, whereupon I was asked to write it. In two hours I had improvised an orchestral accompaniment and that evening I performed it with Professor Calli, making a great success."

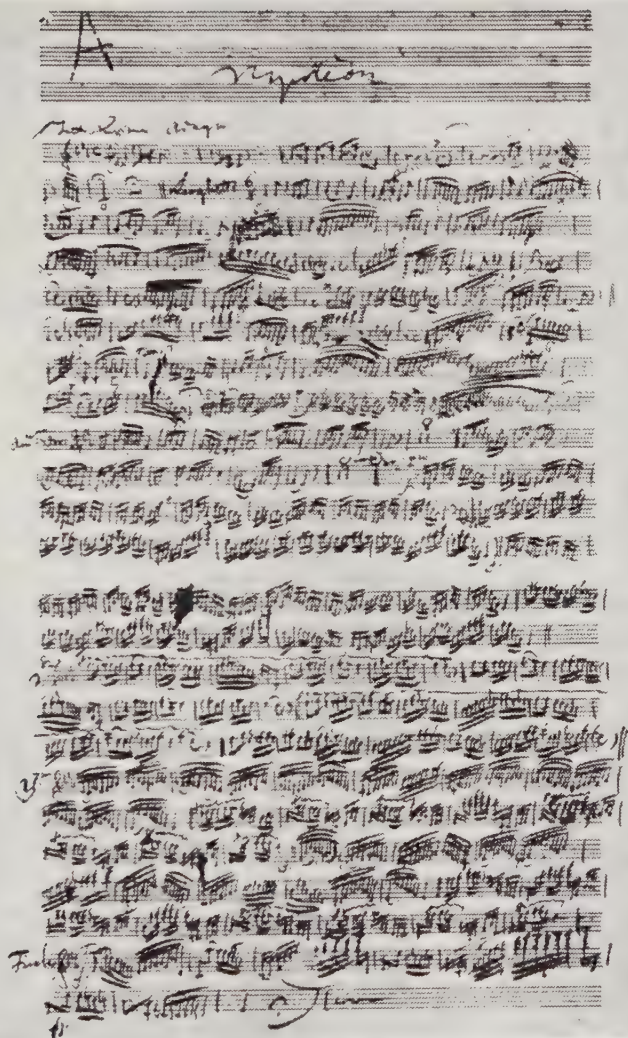
Paganini's predilection for broken strings dates from this period.

"At Lucca I directed the orchestra when the reigning family honored the opera with their presence. I was often called upon to play at Court: and then I organized fortnightly concerts. The Princess Elisa always withdrew before the termination, as my harmonic sounds irritated her nerves. A lady, whom I had long loved without having avowed my passion, attended the concerts with great regularity. I fancied that I perceived that I was the object of her assiduous visits. Insensibly our mutual passion increased. But important motives rendered prudence and mystery necessary; our love, in consequence, became more violent. I had promised her on one occasion that, at the following concert, I would introduce a musical piece which should bear allusion to our relative positions and I announced to the Court a novelty under the title of *Scène Amoureuse*. Curiosity rose to the highest pitch; but the surprise of all present at Court was extreme when I entered the salon with a violin with only two strings. I had retained only the cantino and the sol. One was to express the sentiments of a young girl, the other was

to express the passionate language of a lover. I had composed a kind of dialogue, in which the most tender accents followed outbursts of jealousy. There were chords, now insinuating, now lamenting, cries of joy and anger, felicity and pain. It ended, naturally, with a reconciliation, and the two lovers, more in love than ever, joined in a *passo a due*, which ended in a brilliant finale. This novelty was well received. I do not speak of the languishing looks which the goddess of my thoughts darted at me. The Princess Elisa lauded me to the skies, and said to me in the most gracious manner possible, 'You have just performed impossibilities; would not a single string suffice for your talent?' I promised to make the attempt. The idea delighted me, and some weeks after, I composed my military sonata, entitled *Napoleon*, which I performed on the 15th of August, the Emperor's birthday, before a numerous and brilliant Court. Its success far surpassed my expectations. In fact, a Cantata by Cimarosa, given the same evening, fell through without producing any impression on its hearers. My predilection for the G string dates from this period. All I wrote for this string was received with enthusiasm, and I daily acquired greater skill upon it: hence I obtained the mastery of it, which you know, and should no longer surprise you."

The Dark Lady of the Duet was a countess, younger than Elise and lacking the disadvantage of being Paganini's benefactor.

The Countess Adele enjoyed the clandestine love of the princess' clandestine lover. After *déjeuner*, when the princess was taking her beauty nap, Nicolo would slip out of a side door of the palace and hurry to a tryst amid Etruscan ruins.



### "NAPOLEON"

Sonata for the G. String composed at Lucca for the birthday of the Emperor. (*Unpublished.*)



Sometimes he would escort a veiled lady on a pilgrimage. Sitting in the shadow of a church, they counted the minutes, made precious by the necessity of counting. Soft black hair against a pallid cheek, and over their heads the church bells fill the air with silver. Suddenly Paganini releases her hand, springs to his feet and looks at a jeweled watch. "*Cara mia*," he says, "I must go to that tiresome old woman. I would much rather stay with you but you know how it is when a princess commands."

None of his commentators has said definitely that Paganini was Elise's lover. Fétis says that Conestabile hints it between the lines, and Conestabile uses the verb "*amo*" in a sense which admits of interpretation. Knowing that Paganini's relationship with women was invariably sexual, and knowing that Elise was not deterred by scruples, but one conclusion can be drawn, which her subsequent emotional reaction tends to confirm.

That Paganini's harmonics "irritated her nerves" is not difficult to understand. Paganini's music appealed rather to the nerves than to the intellect, and his delicate flageolets may have been too precarious to be fully enjoyable. But in retiring before the maestro had finished playing, Elise committed a tactical error unworthy of her illustrious name. Not to read a friend's book, not to attend his concert, is an offense that, under certain circumstances, can be forgiven; but to leave the book unfinished or to walk out before the end of the performance is to wound a man's most vital spot, his vanity. The Princess Elise did, however, encourage Paganini in an intelligent manner, which undoubtedly made him hate her

A warm evening in May, in the garden of the palace. The rustle of silks, the clink of medals, the swaying of branches, formed a soft obbligato to the strains of Paganini's violin. One of the nobles, slightly more feline or more drunk than the rest, said, quite audibly:—

“You played exquisitely. Not only their Royal Highnesses were moved, but also the countess. She was in ecstasy.”

Paganini wished to demand satisfaction but discretion is the better part of intrigue. There was the lady's husband and there was the princess, whose little brother was a power in the land. He decided it was time to make a concert tour.



## XI

### BROKEN STRING

THE rich pay less for their commodities than the poor. The household of Elise really cost less to maintain than might be supposed. Many of the court officials were members of noble families of Lucca, who found ample compensation in the dignity of their new positions. The servants seem to have been badly paid, some of the lackeys receiving only three hundred francs a year, out of which they had to pay for their own food. Paganini's emolument for being Director of the Court Orchestra, First Violinist, Chief Soloist, Captain of the Royal Body Guard and instructor would scarcely keep one of our present conductors in bâtons.

He obtained leave of absence to make professional tours. From 1808 to 1813 he traveled fitfully in northern Italy. It was the age of inconvenience. The itinerary of a modern virtuoso, with a rehearsal in the afternoon, a performance in the evening, and a sleeping car at night, would have bewildered Paganini. Without telephones or telegraphs, and with few newspapers, publicity and advertising were conducted principally by rumor. Nevertheless, Paganini's arrival in each town was awaited with enthusiasm and the house invariably sold out.

"One day at Leghorn," he tells us, "having accidentally run a nail into my heel, I came on the stage limping—and



the public greeted me with a laugh. At the moment when I was beginning my concerto, the tapers fell from my music-stand, drawing a fresh burst of laughter from the audience. Again, after the first few bars of the solo, my upper string broke—which raised the merriment to a climax—but I went through the piece on three strings—and the laughter turned into shouts of enthusiasm.”

It is interesting to speculate how Paganini, in full view of the audience, managed to break the string. Did he carry a concealed blade in his left hand or did he pull out a peg while pretending to tune his instrument?

Debussy said: “The attraction of the virtuoso is very like that of the circus for the crowd. There is always a hope that something dangerous may happen; Mr. X. may play the violin with Mr. Y. on his shoulder; or Mr. Z. may conclude his piece by lifting the piano with his teeth.”

Paganini, by his broken strings, his eccentric appearance, his nerve-splitting harmonics, combined with his substantial musicianship, created a sensation such as no violinist in Europe has done before or since.

Leghorn was the scene of another bizarre occurrence. Paganini had arrived with recommendations to the British consul, who provided him with a concert hall. The local musical organization agreed to be insulted because he had not been recommended to them. The evening of the concert the house was packed to capacity, but no supporting musicians appeared except three or four straggling fiddlers who, by virtue of their incompetence, were not members of the federation. Paganini had to change his program and to make up on his own instrument for the deficiency in support. He enter-

tained the assembly for three hours with what he called "the most lively and youthful playing." The audience, recognizing his sportsmanship as well as his musicianship, cheered lustily.

While at Leghorn, he received a letter from his father:

*Signor Figlio: \**

You, it seems to me, while you are well off, do not think of those who are not so well off. Since you are no longer at court can you not return a while to your home? Don't you ever think of those you left at home—your father, your mother, and your sisters and brother?

I believe these words will be enough to make you understand what your duty is.

I await you.

ANTONIO PAGANINI.

Distance does not diminish fear. Nicolo was out of the reach of his father's heavy hand, he was financially independent of him, nevertheless he was not able to free himself from the terror which the old man inspired. He had earned by his performances about twenty-five thousand lire. He proposed assigning a portion of this to his parents. The proposal was rejected. He then offered the interest of the capital, equally in vain. It is said that Paganini, senior, threatened his son with death unless the whole of the principal were relinquished to him. Nicolo gave up his little fortune to his father.

\* There is no adequate translation for this sarcastic salutation.

## XII

### PAGANINI DEFENDS A LADY WITH HIS VIOLIN

FERRARA, the scene of Tasso's incarceration in a madhouse, turned out to be something of a madhouse for Paganini. Professor Gordigiani, a friend, tells the story in his diary:—

"Friend Paganini suggested to me that I accompany him to Ferrara, where he intended to give a concert; and, because the lady of my heart, Pallerini, the première danseuse of the Opera, was there, I accepted. Our trip was gay because Paganini has spirit, and time can never drag while in his company. We had hardly arrived when the impresario presented himself to the insuperable artist; and the Academia was decided upon for the following day. Paganini hurried to Madame Marcolini to ask her to sing at his concert, while I proceeded to look for the lodging of the dancer. Imagine my delight at the news that she lived at our hotel, in fact, next to my room. I took my friend's guitar and began to play, or, to speak more accurately, to pick out parts of ballets in which Antoinette had let her person shine. After having sung two, three, four pieces, I heard an answer from the neighboring room in a weak but sweet voice; almost crazed with joy, I started anew and was again answered by the fair one. I stood with the guitar in my hand, with my ear pressed against the door, which so barbarously separated us, when

Paganini entered. Paganini is my friend and yet I have to admit that I was embarrassed.

“*‘Cosa fai in quella posizione?’*”

“I stuttered, I know not what. The impish Orpheus, after he had held me with his little black eyes, started to laugh. I held his mouth and begged him for heaven’s sake to keep quiet; but the barbarian would only stop under the condition that I tell him the reason for my peculiar behavior. I confessed everything.

“‘You have done well to tell me the truth,’” said Paganini, ‘because I know her and promise to introduce her to you.’

“You can picture my delight; as we were leaving the room, I darted one more look in the mirror and began to hope.—We knocked at the neighboring door; an *‘Avanti’* sweeter than honey invited us to come in. She was sitting on the sofa that stood at the door of my room, and—it may have been my inflamed imagination—but it seemed to me as though we had surprised her in exactly the same position as Paganini had surprised me. She was dressed very simply; but on this charming body even the simplest clothing was like a royal robe: ‘Grace is not hidden by a lowly dress,’ as Tasso says. Thereby I do not mean to say that she was dressed like a shepherdess, but she was not overloaded by that Fronzoli, and that artificial make-up, that so many of the poor must buy from the modiste, that detracts from Mother Nature’s best gifts.

“She received Paganini as one receives an old friend; and me she greeted with a charm, with a *certo non so ch * that was peculiar only to her. Various things were spoken of;

among others a very original person who continually amused himself by singing in the adjoining room.

" 'And this original being,' I chimed in with a lively voice, 'had the good luck to hear an echo whose voice is far lovelier than all the guitar tones in the world! Now the beautiful one gave me a positively magic glance. A moment of silence, and then we all burst out laughing. I was the first to become calm and Paganini suggested a walk. Oh joy, oh delight! I offered her my arm and pressed that arm, round as though sculptored, that Solomon would have compared with I do not know what, with pillars or with the cedars of Lebanon!'

"After the little walk we were invited by her for the noon-day meal, and I spent the day between torture, joy, hope, between the sweet and the bitter-sweet of a growing passion.

"In the evening we visited the theater; I was, to be honest, in no way satisfied; nothing could please me but Antoinette; we separated very late. On the following morning I awoke with the dawn; and found the truth of Metastasio's verses proven:—

" 'Today the sun is much too slow in its course;  
Every second seems to be a day.'

"Paganini had gone to the rehearsal and I tried to also stand my test by paying my lovely neighbor a visit; she was even more charming than on the previous day. Very boring guests made their appearance; and each one wanted to court her; but none so stormily as I. The door opened, Paganini entered with a sinister countenance, his hair in disorder.

" '*Cosei mi vuol fare arrabbiare!* She wants to make me



mad. They want to embarrass me but they shall not succeed!

" 'What is the matter?' I asked.

" 'What has happened?' cried Pallerini.

"Paganini told up that la Marcolini had suddenly changed her mind and did not wish to sing; and that he should really have been very much embarrassed had he not thought of someone who would be able to smooth things over. We all asked who this might be. At that the genius turned to our beautiful one, very gallantly and politely—for he could be gentlemanly if he wished—and said in a majestic and declamatory tone:

" 'This one; she is the person.'

"Antoinette replied, surprised, 'Who, I? Dear Paganini, I believe you are joking! I sing? I, and at your concert and in the place of the clever Marcolini? I would only be laughed at. No, no!'

" 'Yes! yes!' we all cry. She tries to protest; Paganini throws a glance at us; we start to talk; the break is made, and after energetic and useless opposition the agreement is reached.

"At last an aria is agreed upon. They all retire and Paganini invites the entire company to be guests after the concert. But I, making use of my right as a neighbor, remain; Paganini takes up the guitar and starts to accompany the chosen aria, which was easy, short but appealing and suitable to the weak though lovely voice of the artist. I took over the rôle of audience and from time to time gave the merited signs of approval. Antoinette laughed and could not sing further, at which our friend was rather annoyed; a fresh start was made

and ended with renewed laughter. So we closed our noon-day meal with song and laughter;—meanwhile, with the sinking of the sun, our spirits also sank! Fear swung her scepter; for Antoinette, who was to appear as a singer for the first time, knew well that Madame Marcolini had many friends; she began to reproach herself for having consented, but it was too late.

“We left in order to allow her to make her toilette. Paganini had finished his in a second; he jumped into his black trousers, stepped into his shoes, wound a large bandage about his neck, slipped into his vest and his coat. More quickly even was the toilette of the violin made, in that he only wiped the dust from it. The coach arrived.

“The theater is filled. After the overture, Paganini appears; he has a magic and a delighting effect; our poor friend is shaking like an aspen; I encourage her; Paganini cheers her up; he takes her hand and leads her out before the audience. Just as Thetis, by her presence, momentarily calms the storm-tossed waves, just as at the appearance of the rainbow, that brilliant Iris, the thunder ceases, even so does the orchestra that is continually shouting ‘Paganini, Paganini,’ become quiet as the beautiful Pallerini appears. The Ritor-nello starts; from the wings I could see her heart beating, but mine also beat like a hammer. She started; her shaking voice showed how much she feared the audience, who, however, encouraged her; gradually she gained confidence; but the aria was short and by the time the full courage returned, it was no longer needed.

“Paganini led her onto the stage. A terrible shrill whistling was to be heard that followed her all the way back to the



wings. Pale with rage, the artist turned, and the stricken Antoinette almost fell into my arms. I felt warm tears on my hand; I heard sighs and her heart beat against mine. Had I had the one before me who could insult this personified Grace, by Heaven! it would have come to the utmost. But many more shared my indignation, my anger; in the orchestra rose a murmur of disapproval, and the hidden whistler, as cowardly as his deed, unquestionably now held a handkerchief before his shameless face, that might have been whiter than the wall itself.

"The highly insulted one took my arm and accompanied me into the dressing room. Oh, how happy was I here. Antoinette could cry and rage but always she remained tempting. I tried to comfort her. The concert was approaching the end, and Paganini entered the room and said:

" 'Precious Pallerini, on my account were you insulted; this insult stands alone, for it shall absolutely never be repeated and has never occurred before. For me you have suffered, therefore it is up to me to avenge you as quickly and as well as I can. Have the goodness to step into the wings; for now I shall begin my last piece; and I hope I shall be lucky enough to convince you that Paganini does not wish to appear ungrateful to his friends but seeks to give them their rights.'

"Even though Antoinette as well as I tried to dissuade the artist from his intention, he paid no attention to us, but called as he stepped out:

" 'Come and hear!'

"Curious to witness his revenge, we stepped into the wings.

"Our friend, in accordance with the program, began a humorous number in which he imitated the voices of animals on the violin, asking the audience beforehand not to take this carnival critically, but to consider it as an intermezzo that was merely intended to declare war upon Gloom. He imitated the cock's crow, the chirping of the cricket, the howling of dogs, the squeaking of doors, and similar noises. All these little fooleries were creditably carried out, although they contrasted strongly with the other offerings of that evening's concert; but where was the revenge? The time approaches. Paganini turns with a significant glance towards us and steps towards the parterre. Near the footlights he makes a motion that causes the audience to become silent and expect something unusual. From the right to the left he draws his bow on the finest, that is, the E string, beyond the bridge of the violin, and then jumps suddenly with great strength from the left to the right on the strong G string, in imitation of the well-known 'Ee—ah!'

"*'Questo e per quello che ha fischiato!'* (This is for him who whistled) he called loudly.

"Wild whistling, hissing, scraping, and screaming are now heard; but Paganini, undisturbed, repeats his Ee—ah several times, finally retreats into the wings with a still stronger Ee—ah; the storm becomes wilder; our friend, however, hurries towards us like a victor and is in the act of appearing before the audience once more. However, Pallerini restrains him by putting her arms about him and breathing a grateful kiss upon his cheek that surpasses the sweetest zephyr of his violin. For such a prize I would allow myself to be whistled off not only for a moment but for a whole night! Helena was

the cause of Troy's downfall; Antoinette, not less lovely but less guilty than the Greek beauty, almost gave cause for the destruction of the theater of Ferrara. The thing was getting serious; some of the crazed ones showed signs of storming in upon the stage, others beat madly upon the door which led from the orchestra to the stage, which was luckily locked. The members of the orchestra screamed and ran away. We saw ourselves besieged on all sides and every entrance seemed blocked by enemies. Paganini held the violin like a shield and the bow like a sword in the air; I, like a second Patroclus, did not stir from Achilles' side and did not lose sight of the trembling Breside for a moment. An officer of the law came, who, like Calcante, finally quieted the rage of the screamers and the nervousness of the ladies. The commissioner said bitter things to Paganini, who remarked that he did not believe that he had done anything wrong, as the imitation of the voices of animals had been announced on the program, and besides, the one point that had been so much stressed had been merely intended for the whistler.

"He was not permitted to give a second concert but our master retorted that he would have refused anyhow had he been begged a thousand times, and that far more interesting cities than Ferrara appreciated him. With great caution we left the theater through a back door because at the other end there were still some rowdies. We returned to the hotel, accompanied by a party of friends. Good wine made us forget our troubles; and anger was changed to laughter; Antoinette's eyes shone anew with joy; peace returned to all hearts and only I remained without it for some time."

The explanation of this incident lies in a local state of

affairs. It happened that the inhabitants of the villages surrounding Ferrara looked down upon the Ferrarians, and with subtle wit referred to them as "donkeys." When they returned home from this city and were asked where they had been, they would invariably answer by making the sound of a donkey's bray—"Ee—ah."

The audience naturally construed Paganini's musical imitation as a personal insult.

### XIII

#### ELISE LETS HIM GO

EACH victory of the Grand Army was the excuse for a fête. Nevertheless Elise began to find Lucca dull. Alfieri, after spending twenty-four hours in Lucca, had said, "*Un Giorno a Lucca mi parve un Secolo.*" (A day in Lucca seems to me a century.)

In 1808, when the Tuscan state became incorporated into the French Empire, she wrote her brother to fix her residence at Florence. Again Napoleon yielded and the Princess of Lucca became the Grand Duchess of Tuscany.

She gathered her Lares and Penates, her statuettes and pictures, her Fouchés and Paganinis, and, not forgetting Félice, she continued the grand cavalcade on to Florence, where she set up her little monarchy on the banks of the dirty and fascinating Arno.

Elise dared to rule the Tuscans with a strong hand. They were not as gullible as the Lucchesi, nor so easily satisfied. She sought to humiliate the ancient Tuscan nobility and disgraced her brother by an affair with a young man named Lucchesini. The Tuscan newspapers printed accounts of her reviews and hunting parties until the Emperor, annoyed by her craze for notoriety, wrote her:

"Europe pays very little heed to what the Grand Duchess of Tuscany is doing."

But Elise felt secure with one brother a king in Holland, another in Westphalia, a third in Spain, and a fourth sitting in state on the top of an enlarged France. She floated carelessly on the crest of her wave, not heeding the widening ripples that were coming from the Spanish coast.

Paganini retained his attachment to the court but made extensive tours. This period is regarded as another mysterious one in his life by those who look for mysteries, but there are records of concerts in various cities in Romagna and Lombardy. In 1809 Elise recalled him to the court of Florence to play at a festival celebrating the peace between France and Austria. About this time Bartolini made the famous bust of Paganini. At Turin he met the beautiful Princess Pauline Borghese and her husband, who heard him at several concerts. In that city he also caught the terrible malady which, as the French say, "does not pardon," the ghastly intestinal plague which tormented him for the rest of his life and made him an addict of patent medicines.

Throughout Paganini's life he was subject to periods of severe illness. Frequently concerts had to be cancelled owing to his indisposition and all through his active career are long periods of rest during which he disappeared from public view. It is interesting to conjecture what his life would have been had his health been normal, whether he would have been a greater or a lesser artist. Certainly he would have been a different one, for we find throughout his career not only tours but detours, necessitated by attacks of his malady and sometimes leading him into curious byways.

1811 was the year of the Great Comet. It was the year of the birth of the unfortunate King of Rome, of Thackeray,



of Gautier. It was the year of the birth of Franz Liszt, on whose style Paganini had such a revolutionary effect. On the 16th of August we find Paganini creating a furor in Parma with his *Sonata Napoleone*. About the year 1811 the fame of the young Italian violinist had slipped over the borders of his native land into the German newspapers, skipping entirely an artistically insular France. The musical papers of Berlin and Vienna were taking some of the space away from Spohr, their own nightingale, to devote to this Paganini.

When he returned to his Florentine headquarters, he was a little more important and Elise a little less. Her brother had made his march backward from the ashes of Moscow. Perhaps the incident which led to his dismissal was the result of her jealousy, or perhaps it was deliberately perpetrated by Paganini in his desire to disentangle his chariot from a falling star, who was at the same time an aging woman. At a grand court gala, where a concert preceded a spectacular ball, Paganini appeared in the conductor's stand in his uniform of Captain of the Royal Gendarmerie. The Grand Duchess sent her command that his uniform was to be replaced by evening dress. Paganini replied that he was permitted, by virtue of his commission, to wear the uniform. The command was repeated during the concert and again met with refusal. Liszt publicly insulted a czar for talking during his performance. Paganini had far less cause to insult a poor princess who merely fainted occasionally at his harmonics.

Defying royal command, Paganini appeared in the ball room in his trappings and paraded up and down. There was nothing for the Princess to do but dismiss him. Resisting the



entreaties of the ladies of the Court, he quit Florence during the night, and traveled in the direction of Lombardy.

The most tempting offers and promises of leniency did not induce him to return. At one stroke he had rid himself of his post and of one or two mistresses. He never again attached himself to a post.

At this point of his history Fétis delicately inserts a footnote in minion:—

From the sentiments which induced the Grand Duchess to overlook his insubordination, and from certain innuendoes which have escaped the pen of M. Conestabile, inferences may be drawn, which delicacy dictates should not be mentioned unreservedly.

## XIV

### MILAN

THE spring of 1813 found Napoleon fighting for a lost cause in Germany, Wellington chasing the French across the Pyrenees, and Paganini enjoying life in Milan.

He was thirty-one, round-faced and not without fame. The city that hated and insulted Liszt welcomed Paganini socially as well as artistically. His first appearance at La Scala on October 29th was the greatest triumph he had yet achieved. Imagine the opera house, with its huge orchestra and six tiers crowded to capacity, not for one, but for twelve concerts within the space of six weeks. Milan was not Genoa, proud of a native son, or Lucca, seeking to hasten the passage of a long dull evening. Milan was a metropolis, as much French as Italian, and accustomed to first class music.

At one of his concerts, at the Rè Theater, he was assisted by his former pupil, Caterina Calcagno.

When Nicolo was well enough, he went to the theater, to dine with friends, or to hear music. Beethoven's *Seventh* was performed in Milan for the first time. *Il Noce Di Benevento*, to which Süssmayer had written a musical score, suggested to Paganini the variations, *Le Streghe*, (The Witches), a weird and effective composition. After a short introduction, the first variation is played in double and triple stops; the second, produces a surprise effect by its mixture of harmonics

and pizzicato; the third, is a dialogue between the fourth string and double harmonics; the finale contains rapid passages on the G string combined with harmonics. This kind of music lent color to the stories, which were beginning to grow about the violinist. No press agent could have planned a more consistent publicity campaign. People who had never before heard a recital wanted to see the man who had lived among robbers—conspired with the Carbonari—poisoned his wife—gone riding with four mistresses in one coach—performed incantations—and languished in prison in Milan, Verona, Genoa or Mantua.

Even Stendhal, that astute swordsman of the pen and penman of the rapier, wrote:—

“This ardent spirit did not achieve his sublime talent by eight years of patience and by way of the Conservatoire, but by an *erreur de l’amour*, which, it is said, threw him into prison for many years. Solitary and abandoned in an imprisonment which would terminate by execution, nothing remained to him but his violin. He learned to translate his soul into sound and the long evenings of captivity afforded him the time to perfect himself in this language.”

The story of Paganini’s imprisonment gained such credence that fifteen years later, when he wished to refute it, he found he could not. Many of his biographers have gone to the trouble of establishing a complete alibi covering his entire life. We know now, of course, that Paganini did very little languishing in prison and that there is not a murder to his record. But what miraculously escaped the newspapers is the fact that he did spend eight days in jail. This was actually, as Stendhal says, by an *erreur de l’amour*, though the story

DEDICATED TO SIGNOR NICOLÒ PAGANINI.



PAGANINI'S INCANTATION,  
Composed for the Piano Forte by  
THOS WELSH ESQ.<sup>th</sup> AND A. P. DEINRICH.

*Revised after the popular Ballad.*

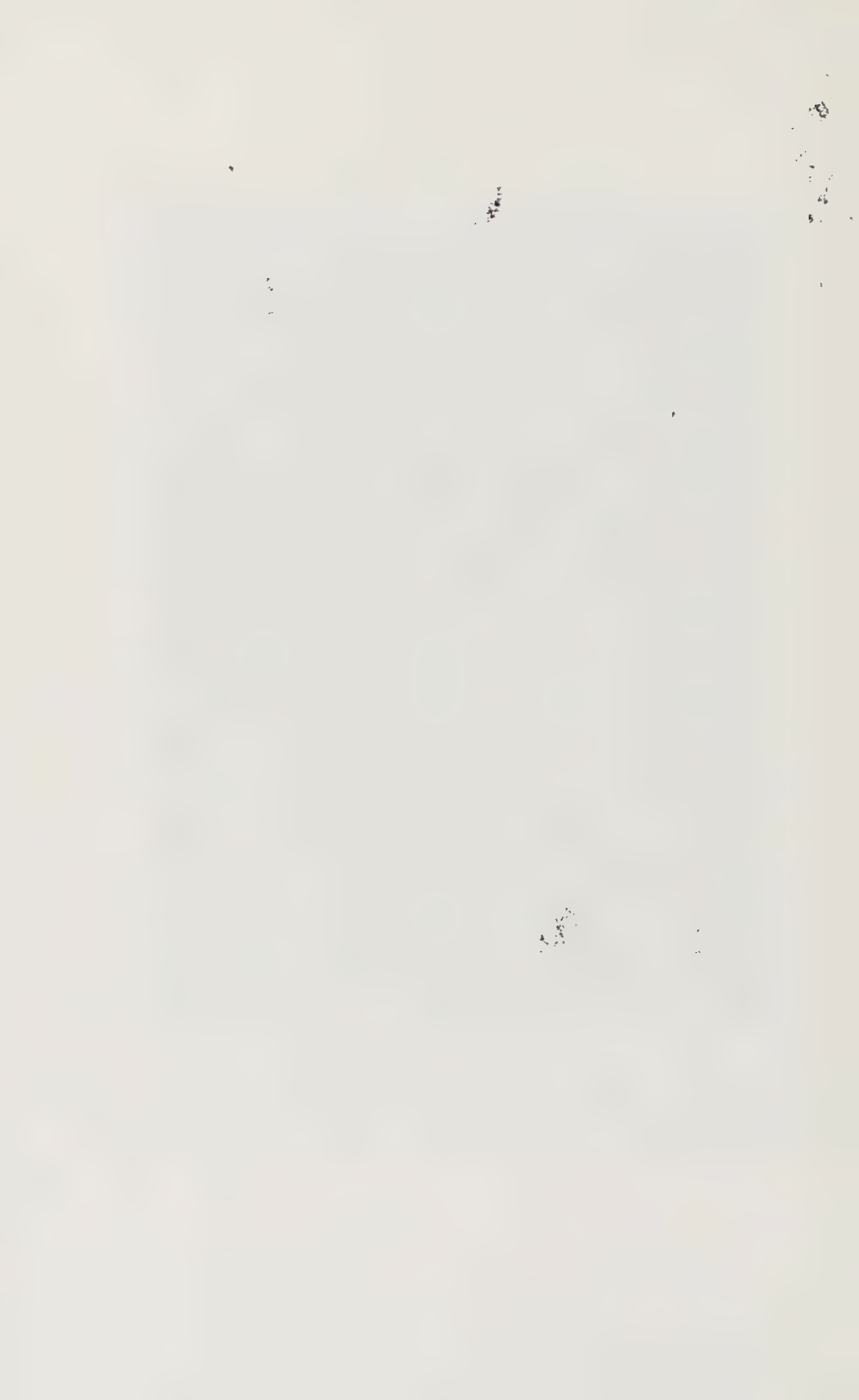
"THE WITCHES' DANCE"

*As it is now reprinted from the London Edition of 1840, it is  
now in the hands of Mrs. Ostinelli and her family. The original  
is the property of the Publisher.*

Mrs. Ostinelli.

EVEN MUSIC PUBLISHERS WERE INFLUENCED  
BY THE PAGANINI MYTH

(Courtesy of The Harvard Library.)



is quite different from the accepted one. The cause of Paganini's imprisonment was a suit for breach of promise.

Within the next five years Paganini returned to Milan at least five times, making a long stay each time. In time he became familiar with all the great centers of Europe, but he never loved a city as he did the Lombard capital.

At the cafés he could meet artists and converse in his own language. The theater was his theater, and did not need translation, and the people regarded him as their own. He never quite lost his fear of the French and his contempt for the English, and was never at home anywhere outside of Italy.

At a theater in Milan he saw di Marini and became so wrought up that he could not sleep that night.

The hero, in a gloomy prison, after recapitulating his misfortunes, called on Providence to relieve him of life. Paganini lay awake, haunted by the quality of the tragic voice. Despairing of sleep, he rose and wrote the Adagio movement of his *First Concerto*. It was in this movement that William Gardner heard "tones more than human, which seemed to be wrung from the deepest anguish of a broken heart." There are no harmonics, no double stops, no "effects," nothing but the bitter misery of a man wanting to die.

Much of the best in Paganini's music may be lost to us, for it is said that, like Beethoven, his improvisations were better than any compositions he committed to paper.

On a short visit to Bologna the following October he began the friendship with Rossini which continued intermittently for the rest of his life. At twenty-two Rossini had revolutionized Italian opera and was the darling of the gallery



gods. By Court favor he had escaped conscription and hastened to Bologna. Here, at the house of the Pegnalva family, Paganini improvised airs to Rossini's piano accompaniment. Paganini then toured through Romagna and at Ancona was detained for several months by a "nervous disease."

Meyerbeer came to Italy and heard Paganini in Florence. It is said that he changed his plan to go to Naples to produce his opera in order to follow Paganini through Tuscany, and that not until he had heard the violinist eighteen times could he tear himself away.

Paganini founded *Gli Orphei*, a society of musical amateurs of Milan. It had for its principal object the execution of the works of ancient masters. He conducted several concerts with no reward but a few medals. While he seldom played Beethoven or other standard concerti in public, nothing gave him more pleasure than to participate in the great quartets of the master at the homes of his friends. His favorite was the *Quartet in F*, Opus 59, No. 1. This work, with its sensitive adagio, and its colorful *Thème Russe*, gave Paganini adequate opportunity to exercise not only his solo virtuosity but his ensemble playing.

When he was in Venice he took the theme of a popular air of the day called *Oh, Mamma!* and dressed it up with nineteen variations into the *Carnival of Venice*.

He has been accused of a predilection for his own music. In his public appearances that was the case, but a man's amateur activities are surely a truer index to his taste than his professional. Paganini knew only too well that in standard concerti he had many peers and that, if he wished to stand alone, he must do so on an ivory tower of his own rearing.





ROSSINI  
One of Paganini's few friends.



"I have my own peculiar style; in accordance with this, I regulate my compositions. To play those of other artists, I must arrange them accordingly; I had much rather write a piece in which I can trust myself to my own musical expression."

We do not criticize a tragedian because he cannot achieve a triumph in comedy or a poet because he does not write advertising slogans. If Paganini had applied himself to the performance of Beethoven and Bach, he would undoubtedly have achieved excellence, and perhaps he would never have been heard of.

## XV

### A SUIT FOR BREACH OF PROMISE

ON one of his short visits to Genoa Paganini fell in love, as was his custom. This time it was with a handsome, stupid girl of seventeen, daughter of a tailor. The girl was not too stupid, however, to demand marriage, and Paganini had to employ strategy.

"Under the pretext of being more free to make arrangements for their marriage," he lured the young lady into a room of the schoolhouse and there took advantage of what her father described as her innocence. According to the petition presented by Ferdinando Cavanna, the girl's father, to the *Avvocato dei Poveri* (lawyer for the poor) Paganini, after having given "apparently all orders for the celebration of said marriage with the pretext that the marriage could not be effected in Genoa, owing to the opposition of the parents, he dragged her to Parma without speaking of marriage any more." Here Signor Cavanna for the benefit of the Court goes into detail about a homely incident in the lives of his daughter and the artist:—

"Here he noticed that the marriage had been consummated, owing to the troubles complained of by the girl, and which, in her innocence, she attributed to worms. Leaving her in her error, however, he promised to cure her and, in fact, brought her ten packages containing doses of a white powder

with a tendency to pink and the following morning prepared her a dose of this in a glass of barley water with sugar, which he made her drink, and after which he left her, and very soon the girl was extremely troubled by nausea which lasted until night, with loss of blood. To this were witness two waiters of the *Locanda* (cheap lodging house) whom she cannot identify, one a Swiss and the other a Venetian, to whom she related about the powder, and as she refused to take any more, Paganini, not wanting to be bothered with the annoyance and the expense of pregnancy, tried to free himself in another way. He pretended to have been called and obliged by the police to send Angelina home."

According to the plaintiff, "the incredible cruelty of the violinist did not end here. Angelina wished to modestly retire to the house of her sister's wet nurse. In the same clothes which she wore at the Inn and in the hope of obtaining her things from Paganini she arrived at Fumeri in the heart of winter with a miserable *pezza di spagna*, which she had saved and with which she kept herself for several months, during which time she received no word from the inhuman Paganini. She nearly died of hunger and cold, and in the hut of charitable but miserably poor people she found a bed of straw and a crust. She was compelled to dry her chemise before the fire during the day, as it was wet at night by the leaking roof. Here she would have died, if Divine Providence had not made known this place to her father, where he went at once, finding the unhappy creature half dead."

On the 6th of May, 1815, Paganini was arrested at the instigation of Cavanna and thrust into prison, where he remained until May 14th, when he was liberated upon the

promise to pay twelve hundred lira and the signing of the following agreement:—

Being true that following the claim of the tailor, Ferdinando Cavanna, the professor of violin, Nicolo Paganini, was on the 6th day of the current May summoned to appear before the Illustrious Deputy of the Month of the Police Magistrate and that said Paganini in obedience to the advice received personally appeared on that same day before the aforesaid Illustrious Deputy where there also was the said tailor, Cavanna. And that owing to the dispute between said Cavanna and said Paganini and that the said Illustrious Deputy sent to the police chamber the said Paganini until he comes to an agreement with the said tailor, Cavanna, in the interest of said dispute, and in order that Paganini be liberated through the intermediary of common friends,

BE agreed that said Paganini disburse and pay to said tailor the sum of twelve hundred lira and (being true) that said parties wishing that the settlement they come to should attain its full and free effect, the said Paganini disburses in cash to said Cavanna six hundred lira which said Cavanna herewith has taken and takes and of same acquits the said Paganini and agrees and begs the Illustrious Magistrate of Police that the said Paganini be released from his detention. The remaining six hundred lira in completion of the twelve hundred lira aforesaid, Paganini undertakes the obligation of paying to the said present Cavanna, who accepts it within the term of four months, for which payment he mortgages the credit that he has against Signors Gio. Batta et Francesco, Father and Son Masnata (quondam) Francesco, resulting from an instrument of the 26 sett. 1814 or more correct date.

Drawn up by the notary Francesco Maria Pizzorno duly inscribed by the Conservatore of Mortgages in Genoa the 28th of September.

Of these presents have been drawn two originals undersigned and approved both by the said Paganini and the said Cavanna for its validity and authenticity.

One is kept by the said Paganini and the other by the said Cavanna for the full observance of the agreement.

Genoa in the chamber of Police of the Torre (tower) where said Paganini is detained this 14th day of May, 1815.

I approve the above

NICOLO PAGANINI,  
FERDINANDO CAVANNA.

This agreement had been preceded by a contract signed the day before, in which Paganini offered to pay six hundred lire at once, but as he wished to pay this amount to Angelina and not to her father, he succeeded in arranging a deposit of the money with Giovan Battista Rovere. Paganini signed these agreements in order to get himself released from jail, but he had not the slightest intention of keeping them. This was the beginning of a series of trials which continued until March 16th of the following year. As soon as Paganini obtained his release, he forbade Rovere to pay the amount held by him until the tribunal should pronounce its decision.

After summoning Cavanna, there was a temporary reconciliation, during which time Paganini promised to marry Angelina, as indicated in Cavanna's petition:

. . . nevertheless (which is to say after the summons) Paganini showed feelings of humanity and justice. He meant that the child should be brought up at his expense and to this end he had charged a sister of his. All the expenses of the confinement were to be paid by him and the mother had to be largely recompensed, quite apart from the twelve hundred lire which he had under-



taken to pay; moreover he intended to marry her. But suddenly he writes a letter to a friend of his charging him to go on with the case aiming to obtain the cancellation of his obligation, and for the recovery of the six hundred lire deposited. He withdraws all his promises and he becomes again unfair and inhuman.

In May, 1815, Paganini "had the refined cruelty to come to Genoa, and in the belief of being free to do whatever he liked, dared to insult the family of the plaintiff by walking under his house and calling to another house near his, thus making a show of his iniquity." Shortly after, on the 24th of June, the girl had to undergo an operation "for the extraction of a dead baby girl, which brought her nearly to her death."

A long legal process followed which cost Paganini a great deal of money and resulted in his imprisonment. Cavanna thought that five thousand lire of Piedmont would heal his daughter's broken heart.

Paganini admitted having lived with the girl and having taken her to Parma. He denied, however, any coercion. In the course of the litigation Paganini managed to produce her birth certificate, proving that she was twenty and not seventeen. His lawyer, Gian Maria Figari, a well-known attorney, summed up his case:—

"It is stated that the first step taken by Angelina was that of going to the room of Rovere. This voluntary abandonment of all respect for the conventions and all duty, is hardly a proof of her innocence and leads to suspicion of her past. It is a well known fact that Ferdinando Cavanna had him-

self shut his daughter out of the house, telling her that if she wanted to subsist she had to earn her living.

“(2) That she always had ample liberty to go out alone either during the day or night.

“(3) That taking advantage of such liberty she had often been seen in the most advanced hours of the night at public dances accompanied by foreigners and soldiers and without being accompanied by any of her family.

“(4) that her neighbors had often complained of her conduct and had spoken badly of her.

“(5) That while she was in her father's house she had secret visitors at suspicious hours.

“(6) That several nights she stayed out of her father's house in a disreputable place (*non conveniente*). And all this during the time she knew the defendant. (*Testimonial di Remissione del 28 Settembre 1815.*)”

Confronted by certain irrefutable facts, the plaintiff and his daughter, Angelina, represented by their lawyer, Francesco Ciocca, eliminated some of the romantic material from the petition and limited the complaints to the following points:—

“(1) That the said Nicolo Paganini is a person used to promising credulous girls to marry them with the object of accomplishing libidinous schemes, although he has no intention of keeping his promises.

“(2) That in order to deceive Angelina Cavanna he made use of these expedients, pretending that he had already obtained their respective birth certificates, in order to get the girl to believe him more easily.

“(3) That in order to keep the girl in this belief so as to

be able to continue to enjoy the fruits of this seduction, Paganini maintained that owing to the opposition of his people to the marriage this could not be effected in Genoa but it could easily be done in Milan, and he therefore induced the girl to follow him in the journey he was making at the time.

“(4) That the defendant, instead of taking the girl to Milan for the marriage, took her to Parma where under the pretext of similar orders from the police he made her return to Fumeri in the *alta Polcevera*, always promising her that he would soon reach her in order to marry her.

“(5) That Angelina Cavanna, having been betrayed, became pregnant and suffered physically. Above all, the good reputation which she had previously enjoyed was very much injured and this caused her much damage because it prevented her from continuing her profession and prevented other chances of marriage.

“To say nothing of the fairly high expenses to which the father was subjected during the time of her pregnancy and her dangerous and difficult confinement. (*Testimoniale di presentazione di comparsa del 31 Novembre 1815. Arch. Civico.*)”

Waiving the claims of rape, violence and theft set forth in the first complaint, the case was reduced to a request for damages for “the work of the skilled seducer.”

The real truth of this case will, of course, never be established. While dragging would have been a difficult business on the high road between Genoa and Parma, Paganini unquestionably used some form of persuasion. How much a

victim Angelina was it is difficult to determine, but had the seducer been a cobbler instead of a famous violinist, there would unquestionably have been no suit.

After the birth of the child the trial was continued, Paganini and Cavanna summoning each other from time to time. Paganini forbade Rovere to pay the amount deposited with him and Cavanna replied by causing to be seized the amount of twenty thousand lire which Paganini had with the Fratelli Masnata. Eventually Paganini was sentenced to the payment of three thousand francs to the Cavanna family.

Paganini expressed his opinion of sex relations to Luigi Guglielmo Germi, his legal, financial and social advisor, with whom he maintained an active correspondence all his life:—

“July 5th, 1815.

“*Dearest Friend:*

“I cannot understand from your letter whether it is a lawyer or a friend writing. On the first point you know that I do not owe anything to a girl who lived in great liberty before knowing me, who offered herself to be my companion, and who voluntarily abandoned her own father; she does not deserve great faith. You speak of coincidence of time with reference to the time of confinement. If you are a lawyer, you must know that that is not enough. The expression of the law saying *it may be declared* of the paternity, means that this single circumstance is not sufficient, owing to the possibility that another may have caused the fecundation. Other circumstances, therefore, are necessary. Any question, however, is abolished by the death of the child because if the law recognizes the existence of a debt, this concerns the son

only. In any case, therefore, the debt of which you remind me is legally absolved.

"Now I speak to the friend. You do not ignore the doubtful character of the woman. You will realize what pain she caused me and what unjust mortification she has caused me to endure from the police. You know that at the price of my liberty, of which I was deprived without cause, they obtained from me an obligation which is null in all its parts, especially since it is an obligation without cause. With this unpleasant picture I cannot understand how you can invite me to be generous. My abused soul and my intimate conscience which feel neither obligation nor duty are against this generosity. I should ask you if you have done what is necessary to withdraw the deposit of the six hundred lire. I must not doubt that you have fulfilled the promises you made me. I am, therefore, sure that you have withdrawn the amount or that you have taken steps to do so. I shall be glad if you will transmit this amount to my father as the money was advanced by him. I moreover point out to you that if the child, as you say in your letter, was born dead, or died immediately after birth, this circumstance might be in my favor as this might be caused by the fact of premature birth and, therefore, the certainty of the time between the two events which would enable the girl to establish my obligation is lacking.

"You must remember, moreover, that the law gives no right to the woman, whatever may be arranged for the child. The law on this point has been wise, and by this omission it provides for the decency of women because by protecting

them it would have facilitated their yielding and removed an obstacle from their virtue.

"You will laugh at my writing you with legal principles, but you must imagine that when one finds himself in trouble of this kind one takes advice and one answers with the language of those who interpret the case with knowledge and sincerity.

Believe me to be  
Your affectionate friend,  
NICOLO PAGANINI."



## XVI

### TWO ANECDOTES

PAGANINI remained sexually adolescent until he became sexually senile. He did not, like Beethoven, search eternally for his mate. "Oh, that at last I may find her who is destined to be mine and who shall strengthen me in virtue." Paganini's ideal reshaped itself to the contour of each new form, and was no deeper than the bloom on a cheek.

He was a Don Juan in the true, rather than the accepted sense of the word. Even in maturity each new love devastated him with its force and subsided only with physical satiety. Nicolo became intellectual about his love only when the first fine careless rapture had been transmuted into routine. When he had, to his way of thinking, played on every string, he lost interest and his curiosity demanded a new instrument.

Liszt said, "Whether a man marries or not, he will sooner or later be sure to regret it." Several times Paganini was on the verge of marriage, but disillusion always preceded consummation.

Had he not been nourished on the lattice-window love of eighteenth-century Italy, it is interesting to speculate what his sex life would have been. Doctor Magnus Hirschfield says:

"It is said that Paganini was homosexual. The name of

his friend was Hyacinth. Jules Siber introduces this element into his novel, *Paganini*."

The novel is purely fictional in other matters, therefore there is no reason to assume that this phase is based on any evidence.

Perhaps it was not a Don Juan complex but a mother fixation which made Paganini turn from one woman after another, invariably disappointed.

Two anecdotes which he told some years later at a dinner table in the presence of Professor Schottky reveal his conception of romance:—

"I found myself in Milan in the worst humor, and not in the best of health; no kind of pleasure offered any interest for me. My heart was empty, and this emptiness was the cause of my melancholy. One day I met a friend, a doctor, who told me that the beautiful Rosina, my compatriot, had arrived in Milan. My blood began to boil, my nerves were quite shaken, and in an instant I passed from the saddest existence to the most exciting one.

" 'Where does she live?'

" 'I don't know, but today after dinner you can find out in the Café de Servi, where I shall meet you.'

"We separated. The time seemed an eternity. I walked up and down, I hurried from café to café, from Corso to Corso. After dinner I wanted to sleep, but Rosina did not allow me to shut my eyes. I had known and loved her for a long time, and here she was, in Milan, now, exactly at the time when I had so great a need for love. How could I sleep with my approaching happiness before my eyes? I went into the café but my friend was not yet there. My boredom,

my incertitude! I played billiards, I drank coffee after coffee, every moment looked at my watch and at the clock of the café, and at the watches of all the people present. Eventually the time passed and my friend came in. In the middle of the game I stopped playing and hurried towards him.

“ ‘Where does she live?’

“ ‘In the Contrada della Passerella.’

“ ‘What number?’

“ ‘Oh, I do not know.’

“ ‘On which floor?’

“ ‘On the second.’

“ ‘Goodby!’

“I am in the little street! I hurry from house to house, I look and look for Rosina, but Rosina is not to be found. Anxiety already torments me. I begin to doubt that I will discover her: the time has passed: I had already gone over the street but I was still standing before a house that I could not remember having visited. New hope, new courage! I hurry, climbing to the second floor. I knock at the door, nobody answers; I open it, and find myself in an antechamber. Many times I repeat, ‘*Si puo?*’ (Is it allowed?)

“Everything is silent and I go farther; in the second room I do not see anything, and I open quite softly a third room that appears half dark. I did not know whether I might advance, and was on the point of going back when I heard a somewhat feeble and languishing voice. If it had been a man’s voice, I would not have remained there any longer, but it was the voice of a woman, and it sounded, moreover, young and fresh. On a bed half-hidden by curtains, was a beautiful young lady who asked whether I was the doctor. I asserted

that I was, got bolder and went nearer. I addressed the habitual questions that doctors ask, tested her pulse, and did my best to play the rôle I had suddenly assumed. Her beautiful hand was resting in my hands, I pressed it, without realizing it, more and more, until the young lady finally began to gaze at me steadily and exclaimed, withdrawing her hand:

“‘I did not know that Signor Paganini was also a doctor!’

“Seeing myself recognized, and not wishing to betray the true reasons of my presence there, I asserted that I realized my disguise was wrong and worthy of punishment but that I had seen the beautiful one somewhere and immediately had fallen in love with her, and that only a true passion has propelled me to such foolhardiness; I was on the point of declaring still much more to her when I heard someone coming. The young lady dropped my hands quickly and I took some steps backward. An old man approached, stood before me, and staring at me asked the sick woman whether I was the doctor.

“Then followed renewed compliments and prayers to be seated. I was in hell, as I feared the entrance of some acquaintance, or what would have been worse, the arrival of the real doctor. To increase my suffering to the highest point, the old man began a slow and long series of questions about his own sicknesses! At last, to take me out of this painful situation, a clock struck seven. I arose quickly; the indefatigable old man would complete the description of all his diseases; would recount to me how doctors had treated him and ask me in conclusion what my own opinion was; but I, my hat in hand, asserted that a sick lady was waiting for me and promised to come again the following day. He prayed

me to come at four o'clock in the afternoon, because he had to be out of his house during the whole morning and wished to enjoy my company. Willingly I promised him all that he wished. I would have promised him also the treasure of the great Mogul, to get free! Hurriedly I pressed once more the pulse of the sick young lady, wiped the cold perspiration from my forehead and flung myself out of the room. As I was going out, I met a servant in the antechamber.

"'Are you the doctor?'"

"'Oh, yes!'"

"'Have you received the *billet* I have left for you in the pharmacy?'"

"'Certainly!'"

"The servant opened the door and I hurried with true joy and great agility downstairs, as I longed for the instant when I would be in the street and could discard my medical dignity.

"It was not Rosina, but she appeared as beautiful as Rosina, and truly with much more spirit.

"I met my friend at the Café della Colonne and here, before an almond milk, I recounted what had happened.

"'And what will you do now?' asked my friend.

"'Tomorrow I shall go again to see her; if she is better, I shall take for myself all the credit of her recovery; if she is worse, in that case you will have the best excuse to hurry to her and make her still more sick.'

"I accompanied him to the Scalini del Duomo. He wished me good luck for the next day and left me. But I, free of all kinds of bad humor walked towards the Corso di Porta Orientale, then from there in the public gardens and finally to the theater la Scala.



"The following day about eight o'clock in the morning I visited my sick girl. She was on her feet and pretended to be serious as she saw me, but I said:

" 'As chance made me your doctor, may I never lose this place of honor, and you have to permit me to test your pulse. At that moment the servant came in and she was obliged to resign herself to letting me do so in order not to arouse suspicion. Daily I paid many visits to her, and always when the talkative old man was not there; the sick young lady became more and more soft, and told me that she had already seen me in a house in Reggio, that she was a widow, and that she had accompanied her father to Milan on account of a process. With health and the buoyancy of youth came also love, and I felt myself for the first and perhaps for the last time obliged to Æsculapius!'"

This story was so well received by the other members of the company that Paganini was moved to tell another adventure of a more gruesome character.

"Rich in money and youth, but without a sweetheart, I found myself at that time in Lucca; and as this solitary state appeared to me unpleasant, I decided to seek what destiny had not offered me.

"While investigating, I passed through the streets and raised my glance towards each window, hoping to discover a beauty to my taste; after many journeys of exploration of this kind, in which I might easily have gotten a stiff neck, I saw a face whose eyes recalled those of Naporriello's goddess, shining and full of fire. Just as he had disguised himself as a *lazzarone*, I decided to disguise myself as a vendor of plaster statues. But finally all this seemed to me too complicated



and I addressed myself directly to my barber, as barbers are well known the world over as *postillons d'amour*. I asked him anxiously whether he knew the girl. The rascal, who either did not know the unfortunate condition of the poor girl, or perhaps wished to deceive me, in order to get the recompense I had promised him, told me brazenly that he knew of a good expedient for introducing me into the house. In fact this messenger of the gods came for me one evening when I was dressing to go to the Court of the Prince where I had to direct a concert. The powdered *gris* swore with solemnity that he would wait for me that night at eleven in order to lead me to the object of my desire. Highly pleased, I hurried to my concert, and to this day I do not know how I played; the *biscrome* seemed to me *semibrevi*, the *presto* seemed *largo*, and so on. After the concert I flew on the wings of hope and love to the rendezvous where the barber was waiting at the door of my beloved; a woman met me and led me into a room on the ground floor where the girl was. Everything was calm, a lamp was flickering, the window was open. I hurried towards the beauty who had not yet perceived me, as her eyes were fixed on the full moon. The woman who had not yet left me, approached the pensive girl and said something which I did not understand; then the young girl turned brusquely, and while gazing at me, began to scream so loudly that I was petrified at first. The old woman tried to calm her and the barber, who was keeping guard in the street, called for me to come out. A thundering voice accompanied the girl's cries. I was dumb with astonishment and wanted to leave the room when I heard someone approaching.

"The lamp had gone out. Everything was in the great-

est confusion, and I, fearing something still worse, jumped through the window, which was fortunately not high, and hurried home.

"The following day I waited for the barber to explain the enigma, but he did not come; then I decided to look for him. This is the explanation: The poor girl was mad, because of a disappointment in love and the barber, who hoped that she would mistake me for her lover, who, she thought, was in the moon, had promised the servant half of his recompense if she would introduce me into the house. She let herself be tempted and prepared the poor mad girl to receive her lover, who, she said, was coming back to her. This is why her gaze was fixed on the full moon when I came in—to watch for the moment when the beloved spirit would leave the moon and come to her, to be ready to embrace him. Surprise and joy were the cause of the screams that so frightened me, although they were much less dangerous than those heard from the bridge of the Rialto, and less noisy than those of Rafaelo when he fell downstairs!"

It was not until Nicolo was forty that the idea of intelligence or companionship in a woman occurred to him. At thirty-five he was still chasing curved hips and slender ankles, and his perpetual surprise at the ephemeral quality of these attractions crystallized into the philosophy which he expressed to Germi:—

"I think you will approve of my resolution to consign to the devil all the women I have known, as they only work for my detriment."

## XVII

### A DUEL

THE crossing of bows between Paganini and Lafont at La Scala merely convinced each contestant that he was the victor.

After Paganini's illness in Ancona, he returned to Genoa. Charles Phillipe Lafont, who styled himself *Violin solo aux Cours de France et de Russie*, was playing in Milan and Paganini hastened there to hear him. Lafont was a worthy satellite of the brilliant constellation of Rode, Kreutzer, and Viotti. He studied under Kreutzer at first and later joined the school of Rode, which, with its grace, purity, and elegance, seemed the exact embodiment of his own filigree talent. Lafont's bowing was perfection; his tone, sweet and seductive; his taste, exquisite.

"His performance pleased me exceedingly," said Paganini. "A week afterwards I gave a concert at the Theater La Scala to make myself known to him. The next day Lafont proposed we should both perform on the same evening. I excused myself saying that such experiments were always impolitic, as the public invariably looked upon such matters as duels, in which there was always a victim, and that it would be so in this case; for as he was acknowledged the best violinist in France, so the public indulgently considered me as the best of Italian violinists. Lafont, not looking at it in this light, I was obliged to accept the challenge. I allowed

him to regulate the program, which he did in the following manner:—We each in turn played one of our own compositions, after which we played together the *Symphonie Concertante* of Kreutzer, for two violins. In this I did not deviate in the least from the author's text, while we both were playing our own parts; but in the solos I yielded to my own imagination, and introduced several novelties, which seemed to annoy my adversary. Then followed a Russian air with variations, by Lafont, and I finished the concert with my variations, *Le Streghe*."

The tournament crowded the vast opera house, not only with music lovers, but with those curiosity hunters who frequent freaks even in art. The Frenchman and the Italian each had his adherents, who would stamp and clap and shout for him and hiss at his adversary, but what a treat it must have been to serious students of the violin, what a study of comparative interpretation! Liszt's keyboard duel with Thalberg years later in Paris was a similar occasion. If Liszt has been termed the Paganini of the Pianoforte, Thalberg, with his extraordinary facility at what was then termed "pearl playing," was certainly its Lafont. Liszt's technique was not so unerring as Paganini's, but he knew the nature of his instrument and when he played the line between keyboard and fingers was dissolved. Liszt and his piano were one instrument, just as Paganini's violin was merely an extension of his arm.

If there was an advantage on either side, Lafont had it. Being the violinistic descendant of both Rode and Kreutzer, he was on native ground; while Paganini had often played Rode and Kreutzer concerti, he was only at his best in his

own compositions. Fortunately there was no Eva to be awarded for the prize song, so the contestants ended by shaking hands and congratulating each other.

Paganini's subsequent comment is typical of his artistic fairness:—

"Lafont probably surpassed me in tone, but the applause which followed my efforts convinced me that I did not suffer by comparison."

Fifteen years later Laphaleque published an encomium of Paganini in answer to Guhr's famous analysis.

"Paganini makes sport of that which to the greatest violinist is the *ne plus ultra* of difficulty. Thus in double stopping he executes with more ease and certainty than they on the single string. He even performs it with equal facility in all positions. In a concerto of Kreutzer's he introduces a duetto cantabile, the whole of which he double stops."

Lafont could not let that pass. In a letter to a French Journal he said that he had obtained a partial advantage, alluding to some "*phrase de chant*," and adding that to call Paganini the first violinist of the world would be an injustice to Kreutzer, Rode, Baillot and Habeneck. "And," he adds, "I declare now as I have always done that the French Violin School is the first in the world."

A similar contest occurred two years later at Piacenza, where Paganini played duets of Kreutzer and Pleyel with the Polish violinist, Karl Joseph Lipinski.

Lipinski was a remarkable player, largely self-taught. He was a man of means who did not have to earn his living with his violin. He had followed Paganini from city to city in Italy. At a concert of Paganini's in Piacenza he was the



only one of those present who applauded the first adagio played by the virtuoso, whereby he attracted attention; he explained to a neighbor that he himself was a violinist who had come from the north to hear Paganini; he was taken on to the platform after the concert and there formally introduced. Lipinski visited Paganini daily and "made music" with him, and dedicated to him one of his compositions. Many years later the two met in Warsaw, where the Polish violinist gave a concert. One of the papers lauded him and took the occasion to deprecate the ability of Paganini, bringing out the old accusation of charlatanism. Other journals defended the Italian at the expense of the Pole, and rival factions were formed, "*Hie Paganini*" and "*Hie Lipinski*." Lipinski took the trouble to disclaim connection with the discourteous attacks, while Paganini did not seem at all concerned about the matter. However, the intimacy between the two artists drew to a close. When Paganini was asked whom he considered the foremost violinist of the time, he replied, "The second is undoubtedly Lipinski."

The third challenge occurred in Berlin many years later, when Paganini's position was so well established that he could afford to ignore it. Sigismund Von Praun, a talented but immature genius, paraded defiance in the public press, but brought upon himself nothing but ridicule. There was always someone who found time to write a verse on any subject:—

Low sinks, where he would madly rise,  
This most pretentious imp!  
See! While with Paganin' he vies,  
*Praun* looketh less than *shrimp*!



While comparative criticism is necessary, owing to the paucity of language, it is too bad that we cannot praise without damning. Spohr once said "It is unjust and one-sided to attempt to exalt one style of playing at the expense of another and, in art, no one genius whatever can be permitted to enjoy a monopoly."

It was in October in the year of the Lafont-Paganini contest, that the latter first met the gentle Spohr in Venice.

Spohr was two years younger than Paganini, and the embodiment of everything that Paganini was not. Untaught, Spohr was a born genius and the outstanding characteristic of his playing was its poetry.

Spohr and Paganini could no more be rivals than could Mozart and Richard Strauss. Spohr held the French School in contempt as being uncultivated, and unable to penetrate the inner meaning of music. He regarded the Italian School as superficial. He had an antipathy to harmonics and anything that had the slightest suggestion of trickery or studied effect. Paganini, on the contrary, regarded everything as legitimate that stirred the emotions.

While Spohr gave his recitals, Paganini was recuperating on the restful waters of Venice. He was greatly impressed with the German artist and visited him to congratulate him. An extract from Spohr's diary is a good example of the public conception of Paganini:

Yesterday Paganini came back here from Trieste, and has thus, it would seem, given up his projected journey to Vienna. Today he called to see me, and at last I made the personal acquaintance of this wonderful man, of whom people have spoken to me nearly every day since I came to Italy. No instrumentalist ever before

enraptured the Italians as he has, and though they are not usually very fond of instrumental music, he gave over a dozen concerts in Milan, and has already given five here. Without stopping to enquire into the particular means by which he bewitches the public, one hears on all sides his praises sounded by those who are not musical, that he is a true master in the art of witchery, and that he brings out tones which have never before been heard on the violin. The connoisseurs, on the other hand, assert that his enormous dexterity with the left hand, in double-stops and all kinds of difficult passages, is not to be denied, but that the qualities which enchant the great multitude are debased by charlatanism which cannot compensate for his lack of a fine tone, a long bow-stroke, and a tasteful singing style. But that which satisfies the Italian public, and which has gained for him the title of "The Inimitable" which we see beneath his portraits, is found, on closer examination, to consist of a series of dazzling tricks such as those with which the once famous Scheller used to excite the wonder of the country and also of the townspeople, viz., flageolet tones; variations on one string in which, to produce the greater wonder, he removed the other three strings; a certain kind of pizzicato with the left hand only, without the aid of right hand or bow; as well as tones quite foreign to the violin, such as imitations of the bassoon, the voice of an old woman, and other noises. The people were accustomed to say of Scheller, "One God, one Scheller," but as I had never heard this wondrous player, I wanted to hear Paganini play in his own peculiar style, and the more so, as I presumed this marvelous artist would be at least as clever as he to whom the above saying was applied. The opportunity of attaining his present virtuosity was afforded him through a four years' imprisonment to which he was sentenced for having strangled his wife in a fit of anger. So at least the story runs, both here and at Milan. As his education was so utterly neglected

that he knew neither the art of reading nor of writing, he found time by tedious ways to invent, and by hard work to acquire, the feats with which he has known how to astound the Italian public. His rude and uncultivated manners had estranged several of the best musicians of the day, and these sought to induce me to exalt myself at Paganini's expense, which would not merely have been unjust, as no one would even think of drawing a parallel between two artists of such totally different styles, but would also have been an injury to myself, as it would have turned Paganini's friends and admirers into my enemies. His antagonists have had a letter inserted in one of the papers to the effect that my playing revived the style of the old artists Pugnani and Tartini, whose great and worthy manner of handling the violin had become a lost art in Italy, and that the petty and childish style of the virtuosi of the present time must stand back, because the German and French artists knew how to adapt the noble and chaste style of those old masters to the cultivated tastes of our own day. This letter, which was without my knowledge printed in the papers, did me as much harm as good with the public, because the Venetians are firm in their convictions that Paganini is not only not to be surpassed, but cannot be equaled.

And a few days later:—

Today Paganini came early to see me, and said some very fine things about my concert. I pressed him very earnestly to play something for me, and several musical friends who were with me joined their entreaties to mine. He, however, declined to do so, and excused himself on the ground that he had had a fall, the effects of which he still felt in his arm. But when we were alone together, and I again pressed him to play something for me, he told me that his style suited the public and never failed to produce

upon them its wonted effect, but that if he played before me, he would have to adopt another style, and one for which he was not at all in training. We should, he said, no doubt meet again in Rome or Naples, when he would no longer refuse to comply with my request. It thus seems that I shall have to leave this place without hearing this wonderful performer.

## XVIII

### A SHORT CUT TO VIRTUOSITY

**A**NTONIO PAGANINI died and Camillo Sivori was born. "The cruellest father in musical history" passed out of his son's life, leaving to Nicolo nothing but the financial responsibility of the family. He did not evade this burden, and not only took care of his mother and the sister who remained at home, *Domenica*, but lent five thousand lire to his sister, *Nicoletta*, to pay the gambling debts of her husband, which sum went the way of all such loans. These facts were forgotten in the stories of his avarice, which began to be circulated a little later.

Nicolo was at home and took the opportunity to give a few concerts in Genoa. It was at one of these concerts that a woman was so emotionally moved that she was compelled to leave the hall and hurry home for the premature birth of her child. This boy, *Ernesto Camillo Sivori*, turned out to be the first "second Paganini." At eighteen months he used two sticks in the manner of violin and bow, and exhibited the precocity of refusing to enter a church unless he heard music. At three he began the serious study of the violin, and a few years later was called to play before the King and Queen Dowager. They stood him up on the parlor table.

"The youth," said Paganini, "had barely attained his seventh year when I instructed him in the elements of music.

At the expiration of three days he played several pieces with such facility that everybody exclaimed, 'Paganini has wrought a miracle.' After the lapse of fifteen days he performed at a public concert. It is but justice to add that his progress was greatly facilitated by the perfect accuracy of his ear. My secret once known, artists will devote more serious attention to the study of the violin, an instrument which affords far greater resources than they are apt to imagine. My system will one day be adopted. The method at present followed and which impairs rather than assists the learner, will be abandoned for mine, which requires nothing more than the regular practice of five or six hours each day. It is, however, a gross mistake to imagine that my secret may be discovered by my mode of tuning a violin, or by my style of performance. He that would reap the benefit of my secret must be possessed of intellect."

Paganini wrote a set of six violin sonatas with accompaniment for guitar, viola and violincello, for Sivori. They played these together, Paganini taking the guitar part. After Paganini's death Sivori toured Europe and the two Americas with magnificence. The glory which had accrued to the master, descended on the disciple.

Janin in the *Journal des Debats* wrote:—

. . . Such was the singular effect produced on us on seeing this young man, Camillo Sivori. Youthful, slight and smiling, he reminded us of a statue of dance and song, standing on the yet empty tomb of the mournful and gloomy Paganini. To hear him you would not call his play a prudent and clever imitation, but a parody replete with wit, grace and vivacity. All the grandeur and majesty of the master has disappeared to give place to the brilliant



impetuosity, inexhaustible raciness, joy and petulance of the pupil. The former was grand, profound, gloomy and solemn; the latter is buoyant, heedless, satisfied with life, hurried on by his ardor. His gaiety is almost carried to exaggeration, his levity to the verge of excess, his energy to the extreme of audacity.

James, Sivori's biographer, was carried away to the extent of thinking that the pupil exceeded the master, but Ovide Musin, who knew Sivori in Paris, says that the latter admitted having to arrange many passages in order to play Paganini's music.

Paganini gave Sivori the Vuillaume copy of his Guarnerius violin, some manuscript studies, and willed him on his death his Stradivarius. Sivori was the first to be allowed by the government to play upon the Paganini Guarnerius, in the Municipio. He had a small but silvery tone and played invariably in tune. Sivori combined the radicalism of Paganini's teaching with a solid classical tendency and a certain lack of originality. His desire to please his audience kept him from entering the first rank, and he unfortunately wasted what talent he had on the elaboration of popular airs. But Sivori did study under the master. He did not have the "secret" whispered in his ear as did Ciandelli, a cellist of Naples.

The summer of 1819 found Paganini at Naples, the hot-bed of the Carbonari, giving concerts at the Teatro Del Fondo. Despotism had returned to its throne with a Bourbon, and the Neapolitans were fomenting with unrest prior to their revolution. They resented the intruder from the north, with his formal ways and strange accent. Moreover, they



OLE BULL, SIVORI AND ERNST  
Violinists who were directly influenced by Paganini.



were superstitious, and it was just as well not to have relations with Satan's sycophant. The musicians chose to doubt his reputed talent and engaged a young composer, Danna, fresh from the Conservatorio, to write a string quartet, replete with difficulties in the first violin part. Paganini was invited to a musical gathering where he found Onorio de Vito, Giuseppe Mario Festa, the violoncellist, Ciandelli, and the composer. Paying him slyly malicious compliments, they asked him to join in a performance of the quartet. The other musicians had of course rehearsed their parts. Needless to say, he astonished them all by his performance. Yet one wonders how complimentary Kandler, a journalist, was when he styled him the "Hercules of the Violin."

He had taken rooms in the Petraio quarter. He was troubled with a cough and his pallor and meager condition made his landlord fear that he was a victim of tuberculosis. Other occupants of the house shunned him and held their breath when they passed him on the staircase. The landlord, fearing to lose custom, requested the violinist to move, but he had the gracelessness to do so at a time when Paganini was bedridden and could not comply. Thereupon the landlord ejected him, bed and all. Fortunately the climate of Naples is mild and a fresh air cure was, even then, favorably regarded.

Ciandelli, the violoncellist of the quartet, happened to come along and he manifested quite justifiable surprise at Paganini's public quarters. He not only found accommodations for the sick man, but took the trouble to go back and thrash the landlord. Paganini repaid this kindness by impart-

ing his "secret" to Ciandelli, changing him from a mediocre player to a first rate one in three days!

"Frequently in my presence," observed Schottky, "Paganini has hinted that when tired of his public career, he may one day be induced to communicate to the world a secret, the existence of which is little suspected by musical conservatories, a secret of such wondrous efficacy that by means of it a pupil may aspire to a degree of perfection unattainable by one who, pursuing the ordinary method, should during ten years devote to practice the greater part of each day. Sometimes I affected to view this hardy assertion in the light of a jest; but he would then invariably repeat in a tone of sincerity:

" 'I swear to you that what I say is the simple truth; nay, more, you have the authority to publish my promise in the most unequivocal terms. One individual, and one alone, Monsieur Gaetano Ciandelli of Naples, is the depository of my secret. He was at first an indifferent player on the violoncello, and passed for a musician of the most ordinary acquirements. Having taken a lively interest in his affairs, I resolved to acquaint him with my discovery. I did so, and at the end of three days he was an altered man. I had absolutely worked a miracle in his musical faculties. Instead of a most intolerable scraper, he became a pure and delicate performer.'

"Feeling somewhat indisposed to admit so extraordinary a fact on mere verbal assertion, I obtained from Paganini a written declaration:

" 'Gaetano Ciandelli, of Naples, by means of a magic pro-



PORTRAIT BY INGRES  
1819





cess communicated by Paganini (*per la Maggia comunicatagli*) has become a first performer on the violoncello at the Theater Royal, and may one day become the first in the world.' "

## XIX

### CARNIVAL AT ROME

**F**RAZER remarks the resemblance between the Saturnalia of ancient, and the Carnival of modern, Rome. He considers King Carnival the direct successor to the old King of Saturnalia, and the burning of the effigy a substitution for the actual immolation.

The Carnival of 1817 found Paganini in Rome, ill and alone and looking much older than his thirty-five years. The round contour of his cheeks had disappeared and the great hollows accentuated the dark, fever-bright eyes. Each letter to Germi describes a new symptom, a new hope of cure, a new despair. Had Paganini lived today, he would have been prey to each new cult that promised miraculous dividends for an investment of faith or cash.

Unquestionably Paganini's greatest affliction was in the intestinal tract. When we add to the mistakes of his childhood and the dissipation of his youth a highly sensitized nervous organism, the arch-enemy of digestion, we can understand something of the nature of Paganini's physical afflictions. Moreover, water was impure, doctors ignorant, and life, particularly that of a traveling artist, extremely irregular. Only once is reference made to the disease which Cellini blames on the French, and it was made many years later, shortly before Paganini's death. Paganini himself trans-

mitted to Germi the opinion of a Doctor Guillame, a "*celèbre dottore*, who does not exercise his profession, being more of a philosopher and savant and real genius and highly estimated in Mont Pelier." A few months afterwards Paganini repudiated Dr. Guillame, as he did all his physicians when they did not achieve the miracle he expected. The Doctor's diagnosis was as follows:—

"As I never neglect an opportunity to learn, I am eager to submit my conjectures on the malady of the celebrated *mæstro*. I can formulate them in two words:—Paganini is a soul of fire served by a violin. The soul is intact, the casing is extremely thin and fragile, the strings are all there but they are not in tune and vibrate badly; excessive nervous excitation and diseased spinal column resulting from a syphilitic poison which first attacked the palate and the mouth—such is my opinion. . . ."

With the prevalent disregard of sanitation and with Paganini's lack of fastidiousness in matters of sex, it is not unreasonable to assume that a venereal disease was another of the contributory causes to his general ill health. It would be in the nature of a miracle if he had escaped entirely.

The Carnival was in full swing, "and all the world was as mad at Rome as at other places." The sound of laughter, the strumming of mandolins called to Paganini through the shutters of his sick room. Pale and weak-kneed, he arose, dressed and walked down to the Piazzo.

Masked fauns and nymphs joined hands around the fountains, more grotesque than the stone figures around which they danced.

The revellers surrounded Paganini, pulled at his clothes,

showered him with confetti. A girl kissed him on the cheek. He rubbed it off with the back of his hand. He was tired of women. They were only interesting when they resisted—and they never resisted. Besides, she had been pock-marked. He would go to the Café for a glass of coffee. Suddenly he found himself encircled by two arms—another of those damn punchinellos!

“Nicolò!”

“Giachino!”

The friends embraced.

“Come, let’s have a Capucinno,” said Rossini, “and you must tell me what you have been doing with yourself.”

“I have been ill—and alone—I have not left the Albergo—and you?”

“I have been enjoying life. The food here is marvelous. And I have been working, too, in my spare time.”

They shouted each other down and illustrated their talk with sketches on the marble top of the table. Rossini hummed snatches of *Adelaida di Borgonia*, which he was writing. Paganini told what a sick man he was.

The violinist and the composer were each other’s greatest admirers.

“I have wept but three times in my life,” Rossini once said; “the first, on the failure of my earliest opera; the second, in a boat with some friends when a turkey stuffed with truffles fell overboard; and the third, when I heard Paganini play for the first time.”

Rossini was indeed the spoiled child of Rome. Round and impish, he was the apotheosis of King Carnival. With the rapidity of a lazy man he had turned out one opera after

another. *Il Barbiere de Seviglia*, *Otello*, and *Tancredi* had succeeded each other rapidly, and had passed from opera house to café orchestra. In spite of the fact that Rossini's was "the music of a dishonest man," his operas did represent a departure from what had gone before and his pandering to popularity might be more generally termed a desire to please.

Paganini is indebted to Rossini for many of his most popular compositions. *Non Più Mesta* comes from *Cenerentola* and *Di Tanti Palpiti* is a fantasy on an aria in *Tancredi*. This still remains a *tour de force* for violinists and is almost never heard. One of his most frequently performed works, *The Prayer of Moses* is taken from Rossini's *Mosè in Egitto*, which Wagner burlesques in *Die Meistersinger*. This composition was written originally for violin and orchestra. Berlioz claimed that Paganini employed the bass drum with better effect than did Rossini himself. Rossini arranged the beat of the drum on the first count of the measure, while Paganini syncopated it. Someone suggested to Paganini that Rossini had furnished him a very beautiful theme.

"That is true," the violinist replied, "but he did not invent my bang of the big drum."

Rossini was a skilled pianist, and when he sat before a keyboard, his soft flesh became taut. Auber once said that when Rossini finished playing he could see the keys smoking.

"Let's get Meyerbeer," shouted Rossini, "and start something."

Meyerbeer, it will be remembered, was also an admirer of Paganini. "Where our reason ends," he said, "there Paganini begins."



The three artists masqueraded as female beggars. Rossini permitted his too-large belly to attract solicitude for a delicate condition, while Paganini accentuated his gauntness by a long, straight skirt. Rossini had written a song, *Carnevale*, *Carnevale*, and the group went from house to house and in and out of the cafés, strumming their guitars and singing:—

Blind are we,  
Are born,  
To live  
From pity.  
Do not refuse us poor ones a gift  
On this day of joyousness.

Paganini made speeches in a falsetto voice and Meyerbeer passed the hat. Rossini was permitted to rest after the songs by virtue of his imminent motherhood.

People remarked that they did not play at all badly. This robust son of a slaughter-house inspector, the "Jew banker to whom it occurred to compose operas," and the gaunt Genovese, a decade older than his companions.

## XX

### TO ROSSINI'S RESCUE

PAGANINI was not so well known in Rome as Rossini. His first concert was given in an old palace. The room was cold and dismal and the audience numbered scarcely fifty. The orchestra consisted of half a dozen shabby fiddle scrapers and the singers were members of the chorus of the Teatro Argentine, including the mechanics and stage hands. But Paganini's genius transcended conditions. There was a robustness about his talent that made it rise to a necessity. He played so well that his fame pierced the thick palace wall and his second and third concerts were crowded.

The Vicar, who later became Pope Leo XII, granted him special dispensation to give concerts on Friday, and he was invited to play at fashionable homes. It was through Prince Kaunitz, the Austrian ambassador, that he met Metternich. The latter invited him to come to Vienna as he had invited Rossini, "to assist in the general reëstablishment of harmony." Frau Metternich cordially repeated her husband's invitation. To her the romantic Italian figure was the "whole attraction" at the Carnival. Paganini promised to visit the Austrian capital, but, owing to his spells, his trip was repeatedly deferred.

In 1820 he was able to do Rossini a service and at the same time establish a reputation as an orchestral conductor.

Rossini was producing *Mathilde di Sabranne* in Rome. Just before the opening the director was stricken with a heart attack. Rossini was in despair until Paganini offered to take the bâton. The orchestra was composed of inferior players to whom the music was new. There was time for but one rehearsal. A conductor of experience would not have risked his reputation. Paganini's keen intellect grasped the significance of the score at once and his magnetic personality drew from the orchestra music better than its previous best. There was no time for verbal explanation so he led them by example, playing the first violin part an octave higher than the orchestra so that it could be distinguished. When the new conductor stepped on to the stand at the Teatro d'Apollone, he was greeted with a burst of enthusiasm. But it was the applause of encouragement and doubt. They were expecting very little. The applause which burst forth at the end of the overture was of a different nature. The audience realized with amazement that this Genovese had accomplished the impossible.

To accomplish the impossible was becoming a habit with Paganini, who was gaining a reputation as apostle of the spectacular. He took an impish delight in amazing his friends and confounding his enemies. The breaking of strings in full view of the audience was the least of his artifices. One night at the close of a concert in Genoa he said "*Buona sera*" so unmistakably on the strings that the whole audience replied, "*Buona sera.*"

At Verona, where he was giving a recital, the conductor of the theater, Valdobrini, expressed the belief that he was a charlatan who could execute only his own compositions. He

told his best friends in strict confidence that he did not believe Paganini could play his Variations. When this reached Paganini, he hastened to assure the composer that he would be glad to produce his work at his last concert. At rehearsal the violinist, instead of playing the violin cadenza, filled in his time with fantastic passages to the delight of the orchestra, while the composer pulled his beard and scratched his head.

"This is not my music; I can recognize nothing of what I have written."

"Don't worry," replied Paganini, "you will recognize your work well enough at the concert."

With his customary showmanship, Paganini placed the new piece at the end of the program. After a pause, long enough to heighten the suspense, he came limping on to the stage with the aid of a Malacca walking stick, his violin dangling from the other hand. Solemnly he played the variations through, using the cane as a bow.

At Florence he played an unpublished concerto on the composer's challenge. He borrowed a bad violin and a defective bow, and gave a performance which excited great admiration.

On another occasion he dropped the music and the concert master picked it up. In his nervousness he replaced it upside down. Nobody knew of this mistake but the concert master and Paganini.

At Lucca he played and directed an entire opera with a violin furnished with only the third and the fourth strings, following a bet consisting of a dinner for twenty-five people.

One concert was given on a wooden shoe strung with gut. The stories of his stunts are endless.

Many years later, in Germany, doubts were expressed that he had actually played on one string. It was thought that he quickly changed violins, or had another violinist with the full quota of strings concealed in the wings. He would have had to be a magician, or his alternate player another Paganini. When Mayseder arrived in Milan, he, according to custom, challenged Paganini. He presented him with one of his most difficult compositions, which no one had ever been able to play at sight. Paganini requested Mayseder to put all the strings of his violin out of tune. He then played the variations so delightfully that the audience was enthusiastic and even the composer was satisfied. When he played on one string the string was undoubtedly mounted in a special groove in the middle of the bridge.

Stunt violinists were not unknown in Germany. A man named Peter Knappes of Stuttgart played rondos with the violin upon the bow and danced waltzes while playing on a violin tied to his back. Why did Paganini, a musician of unquestioned genius, bring circus method into the concert hall? A London critic suggests the explanation:

"To effect so much on a single string is truly wonderful; nevertheless any good player could extract more from two than from one. Then why not employ them? We answer because he is waxing exceedingly wealthy by playing on one."

## XXI

### PAGANINI PREPARES FOR MARRIAGE

PAGANINI kissed and told—but initials, not names. In the gentle Neapolitan June he not only told his secret to Ciandelli, but he whispered secrets of greater interest into a more delicate ear. The invisible Germi, the only real friend that Paganini ever had, shook his head over a letter from Naples:—

*“June 22nd, 1821*

*“Dear Friend:*

“I have finally decided to follow the laws of my heart and to marry; an amiable girl, daughter of a very honest family, who combines beauty with the most thorough education, has touched my heart and, although she has no *dot*, I have chosen to be happy with her if Heaven so wills it. I could not be more pleased and my years will elapse in beatitude and I shall see myself reproduced in my own sons.”

Marriage in Italy was not a simple matter of going to a priest or justice. Even a man of thirty-nine had to obtain parental consent. Paganini wrote Germi to forward all the necessary documents. There was but one serious difficulty. How could his mother give her written consent when she could not write?

“Tell my mother that when she goes to the Notary for the act of consent, she must bandage the thumb of her right hand, and when she is asked to sign, she replies that she



cannot do so because that finger is hurt, thus everything is saved.

"As far as the birth certificate is concerned, I would not like to have it appear that I have entered my fortieth year. If you could connive with the parish priest of San Salvatore to make it appear that I am less than forty, it would be a great favor to me. See, therefore, if you can find an opportune way of doing so, and if you are successful, you will give me great consolation."

He commissioned Germi to forward papers to prove his financial position. He grew more and more impatient to consummate this new love, which he believed to be his *grand passion*.

"You know my character and can well understand the extreme agitation (*l'orgasmo*) which possesses my temperament, excited by very sensitive nerves and exalted imagination. If, therefore, you do not want to have me consumed by love and passion, be as quick as you can and take part in the accomplishment of the sweet destiny which is prepared for me. I look forward to showing you my Venus and making you confess that Paganini avoids mediocrity in everything."

On the 10th of July he becomes more confidential:—

"This is the name of my dear one: C. . . . . B. . . . . daughter of the couple Teresa R. . . . . and R. . . . . B. . . . . I admire more and more the friendly and philosophical remarks contained in your letter, and, while it moved the friends to whom I read it to laughter, my heart is filled with contentment because I see an attentive friend speaking to me of my bride. What sweet names! I find everywhere the means of knowing that God will make me happy. Beauty and

education are the two things necessary to my taste. May Heaven help me. I have found the woman I love. You, my mother, and all the others who will see the object of my affection will admire her and praise heaven with me for having created a girl full of all the physical and moral graces."

Suddenly, like the strings of his violin at a concert, all the chords are broken. Paganini is left with jangling, vibrating nerves and shattered illusions. He leaves Naples for Parma. What has happened? The beautiful C. B. could hardly have lost her beauty in so short a time. There was no misunderstanding about money, because Paganini expected none. The probable explanation is that the love was consummated. Paganini was one of those lovers who is inevitably disappointed on achieving the object of his desire. Poor C. B., like Angelina Cavanna, was shunted off to the country to get over her broken heart and, who knows what else, as best she could. And patient Germi received the following from Parma:—

"I experience a great pain not to have written you before now. To you only I shall say that I have found that object (*oggetto*) to be a real *sans-souci* who changed in every way and I therefore freed myself of her after four days which seemed to me like four years. She is now with a country woman who will maintain that she has been in her custody since the time she first left home; thus they will probably believe that nothing took place. I have promised to go back to my country which I shall do at my leisure. Tomorrow I shall leave for Vienna."

But tomorrow he did not leave for Vienna. His plans were again upset by his intestinal *deus ex machina*. He was com-

pelled to remain at Parma throughout the winter, before he was able to take his spring tour through Rome, Venice, Piacenza and Milan.

Paganini's tours were a succession of journeys from sick-bed to concert platform, and each concert was a fresh triumph of his will. When he could return to Genoa to be ill, he was indeed fortunate. Most of the time he was at the mercy of waiters and hotel proprietors and left alone with his pains in chilly hotel rooms. No concert engagement was ever made without the fear that it could not be fulfilled. No *rendezvous* planned without a doubt of its accomplishment.

Changes were going on in the world. A steamboat had crossed the ocean, the *Ninth Symphony* had come to enrich life, and Napoleon I had become history. There was a revolution in Portugal, a famine in Ireland and a restoration of manners in France. But Nicolo Paganini evinced no interest. When Liberalism was dying with Louis XVIII, he knew nothing of it, for he, himself, was dying in Pavia. With the indomitable hardiness of the chronic invalid, he rallied, picked up his violin and marched through the cities where the young prince destined to be Napoleon III was traveling with his mother. He played to crowded houses, receiving honors and invitations, alternating almost with regularity between triumph and pain. Each new doctor meant new hope and he tried every remedy that came to his attention.

From Milan he writes hopefully to Germi:—

“November 26th, 1823

“ . . . I am alive by a miracle. An American doctor has saved me. Borda, according to what he says, tried

the mercurial treatment in order to find out the cause of my cough.

"Now I say, do you think that for the purpose of research such experiments should be made, as though it were on a body sold to him? I find here immorality, ignorance and shrewdness. In the end he gave me plenty of opium, which diminished the cough but took all the strength out of me so that I could not stand. I could not even digest a chocolate in twenty-four hours and my color was that of a corpse. Fortunately I found the aforesaid American doctor in a café, who moved me by persuading me that if I did not follow his advice, I would be buried within a month. He said he understood my illness and that my cough derived from a weakness of the nerves.

" 'Here I am,' I told him, 'in your hands.'

"He gave me some pills, teas made by himself, and for food, good grilled veal cutlets and good wine. In a few days I came to life again and now I feel wonderfully well. All Milan is talking of the American for his having accomplished such a miracle. The cough will go little by little. At the end of the week I'll go back to Villa Nova of General Pina, where I shall have better care and I shall be able to ride as ordered by the American doctor. I, myself, and all the others hate Borda for his having damaged me physically and my purse for nearly two years."

## XXII

### FLORENTINE EPISODES

PAGANINI was pitched in the minor and his keyword was *misterioso*. He not only enjoyed spreading the rumor of his "secret" but he took great pains to further the belief that he was in league with the devil. Since he could not combat the ravages of disease, he capitalized them. He allowed his hair to grow long, dressed in black, and cultivated an eccentricity of manner which, in an age of superstition, strengthened the belief that his art was of fiendish origin. The number of music lovers, then as now, was limited and, when their supply was exhausted, it was well to fill the concert halls with the curious.

The idea of a magic fiddle is one which has been strongly rooted in the popular imagination through many centuries. From Orpheus to the Pied Piper, musicians have been credited with supernatural powers.

Some people are buxom and round and reassuring. In their presence all fears vanish and problems are quickly reduced to a material and logical basis. There are others whose presence makes our pulses quicken, who seem to be old souls, weary with the journey of centuries, whose voices come from depths and whose eyes seem to penetrate into our hidden places. They are tense, nervous, intuitive and quick of perception. Perpetually consumed in their own fires, they



are neither happy nor healthy. Nicolo Paganini was of this type. He was born withered.

A writer named Amati, who was in Florence during one of Paganini's visits to that city, gives his impressions of the melancholy artist:

Near the gate of Pitti there is a steep hill, on the summit of which stands the ancient Fiesole. Here the purest air is inhaled, and the beauty of the prospect produces rather the effect of a dream than of reality. One beautiful May morning, when the flowers and verdure lay smiling, kissed by the sun's rays, I ascended this hill by its most rugged path, whence the most beautiful view is obtained. In front of me was a stranger who, from time to time, stopped to recover his breath and admire the enchanting landscape. Unobtrusively I approached him. Believing himself alone, he spoke aloud, and accompanied his monologue with rapid gesticulations and loud laughter. Suddenly he checked himself; his lynx-like eye had perceived in the distance a charming object, which soon after also attracted my attention. It was a young peasant girl, who was approaching us slowly, carrying a basket of flowers. She wore a straw hat; her hair, dark and lustrous as jet, played upon her forehead; and the regularity of her handsome features was softened by the mildness of her looks. With a beautifully formed hand she constantly replaced her shining ringlets, which the wind displaced. The stranger, astonished at so much beauty, fixed his ardent looks upon her; when she got near she seemed transfixed at the appearance of the individual who stood before her, grew pale, and trembled. Her basket seemed ready to fall from her hands. However, she hurried on and soon disappeared behind a projection. During this period I contemplated the stranger, whose eyes were fixed in the direction the girl had taken. Never had I seen so extraordinary a face. He



merely cast upon me a passing glance, accompanied by a most singular smile, and pursued his way.

The next day dark clouds driven by the winds rolled along like the sea waves; scarcely was the sun visible, yet despite the weather I went out; having traversed the Ponte Delle Grazie, I directed my steps towards the hill, on the summit of which I already perceived the ruined castle with its drawbridge. I approached the remains of this ancient edifice, through the dilapidated walls of which the wind was whistling. Here everything bore the impress of destruction. Contemplating the fearful ravages of time, and listening to the mournful melodies of the hurricane, the moanings of a human voice struck upon my ear and made me shudder. It seemed as if the voice proceeded from a subterranean cavity near where I was standing. I rushed forward to its mouth, where I found a man—pale and haggard—lying on the moss. I recognized the stranger of the previous day; his searching look was fixed upon me; I recoiled from it, perceiving the stranger was in need of no assistance, and so withdrew.

On the following evening, I was walking by the side of the Arno, the moonlight flickering as it rose. The nightingale's note, and the warbling of birds of every kind preparing to roost, were saluting the departing rays of day. Sounds of a totally different nature suddenly intermingled with these harmonized melodies of Nature. Attracted by this exquisite and unknown music, I followed the direction whence it seemed to proceed, and I again found myself near the singular being who had occupied all my thoughts for the last three days. Carelessly lying beneath a tree, his features were now as calm as they had appeared troubled the day previous, and as he listened with impassioned expression to the fury of the tempest in the old castle, so did he now seem to enjoy the concert of the feathered tribe, whose notes he was

whistling with most astounding imitation. I could not explain the strange destiny that led me constantly into his presence.

My astonishment was not yet ended for, on returning on the following evening from a walk, just as the stars began their first scintillations, I sat down to rest under the Loggia degli Uffizi. A joyous party passed me, and sat down on a marble seat some distance from me; soon after, celestial sounds struck upon my ear, by turns joyful and plaintive, evidently produced by the hand of a superior artist. Silence succeeded the hilarious shouts of the merry party, all of whom seemed as transfixed by the divine music as I was myself. They all rose, silently, to follow the artist, who continued walking while he played. I also followed to discover what instrument it was I heard, and who the artist might be that discoursed so enchantingly upon it. Arrived at the square of the Palazzo Vecchio, the party entered a restaurant. I followed them. Here they regained their former merriment, and the leader, more than his companions, displayed extraordinary animation. To my great surprise, the instrument was a guitar (which seemed to have become magical) and the performer I discovered to be the stranger I had so repeatedly met. He was no longer the suffering being he had seemed; his eyes sparkled, his cravat was loosened, and his gesticulations those of a madman. I inquired his name of one of the party.

"None of us knows it," replied the individual to whom I addressed myself; "I was in company with my friends, who were singing and dancing to my guitar, when this singular man pushed in among us and, snatching the guitar from my hands, commenced playing without saying a word. Annoyed at the intrusion, we were about to lay hands upon him, but without noticing us in the least, he continued playing, subjugating us to his exquisite performance. Each time we asked his name he resumed his playing without making any reply. He occasionally ceased for a while to relate to us

some extraordinary anecdote. In this manner he has brought us here. That is all I can tell you."

Some days later Paganini was announced to give a concert. Eager to hear the incomparable artist whose fame was so universal and whom I had not yet heard, I went to the theater, which was literally crowded to suffocation. The utmost impatience was manifested until the concert commenced with a symphony which, although by a composer of eminence, was listened to with indifference. At last the artist appeared. It was the mysterious stranger. I will not attempt to describe the effect of his performance—the transports of frenzy his incomparable talent excited. Let it suffice to say that on that one evening he seemed to unite all the delightful impressions of the graceful appearance of the peasant girl of the mountain, the hurricane in the ruins, the warbling of the feathered songsters on the banks of the Arno, and the inspiring delirium of the evening at the Loggia.

It was in Florence in the spring of 1824 that Paganini was supposed to have made the acquaintance of Byron. Long conversations between the poet and the violinist are recorded. There was some acquaintanceship between the two, because it was to Byron that Paganini's thoughts turned on his death bed. It was not at this time, however, as in the spring of 1824 Byron was fighting his last fight for the Greek ideals at Missolonghi.

At the table d'hôte at a restaurant in Trieste Paganini suddenly jumped up from his place and, in a despairing voice cried:

"Save me, gentlemen, from the ghost which continually follows me. See it there, how it threatens me with the same blood-stained dagger with which I robbed it of life—and she

loved me—and was innocent—oh, two years in prison are not sufficient atonement; my blood must be shed to the last drop.”

He took up the knife that was lying before him and brandished it in the faces of the terrified guests. Then he resumed his seat and, with a sardonic laugh, remarked that he had wished to ridicule the stories which were being spread about him. It was not his logical explanation but his mad outburst which remained in the minds of the guests for many days. Incidentally, the theater at which he was playing turned away patrons for the next concert.

## XXIII

### LA BIANCHI

**I**N the old Agostino in Genoa where little Nicolo made his début, the big Nicolo gave a series of concerts in the winter of 1825.

At the second one he was assisted by two young women.

"The first was Signora Bianchi, under twenty years of age, who was billed as the little *virtuosa forestiera*, and who sang three airs; the other was Signora Barette, who played a Pezzo Cantabile, and a Sonatina upon the violoncello. They both experienced a flattering reception. The first has considerable powers of voice and execution; the latter is wonderfully gifted considering her age, which cannot be more than between twelve and fourteen."

Antonia Bianchi was a singer employed at the San Samuele Theater, in Venice, that ancient edifice, redolent of greater days, where Gozzi's *The Love of the Three Oranges* first saw the footlights and where Immer's troupe had initiated Goldoni's *Belisarius* nearly a century before.

Unknown, scarcely even pretty, Antonia Bianchi of Como—distinguished, also, as the birthplace of the woman who married von Bülow and Wagner—managed to succeed where far more distinguished and beautiful women had failed.

That she was uneducated we know, that she had a jealous temper we learn from Paganini, but her voice was "beautiful





ANTONIA BIANCHI  
The mother of Paganini's son.





and touching; her tones soft, full, round, subtle, and, where necessary, also strong; her trills, high as well as low, are models. Soulful feeling and expression, assimilated with the sounds of her artist friend (Paganini) so that the mutual magnetic power appears unmistakable." This criticism of a joint recital is from the *Leipziger Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* some time later.

Where the acquaintanceship began is not definitely known, but its fruition occurred in the venerable city of Venice, "where the merchants were the kings," the city of balconies and serenades, of moonlight on water, shadowy bridges, of music-laden nights, of intensified vibrations. The figures of the famous artist and his latest paramour became a familiar sight on the Piazza San Marco. Walking in the footsteps of Petrarch and feeding the descendants of the pigeons who perched on the poet's shoulder, the young singer and the middle-aged violinist vowed eternal love. They drank coffee on the terrace of Florian's, bathed in the light that shone for Titian and Tintoretto, gazing into each others' eyes and making plans, mutual and respective.

Antonia was scarcely twenty and unknown; what had she to lose by alliance with so great a man?

As for Nicolo, though his fame was spreading over a continent, he was forty-three. His face was long and thin and deathly pale; he was becoming more and more dependent on the barber, he could no longer eat what he pleased and must count his hours of sleep. Perhaps it would be well to settle down for a while with a little mistress. It is better for the health than going from woman to woman and, in the long run, cheaper.

At night he called for her at the theater. Down the dark waters of the canal they drifted, in and out of the shadows of secretive oriental palaces.

Sometimes, from the black depths of a passing gondola, came the murmur of voices or a phrase of song, dotted by the tinkle of a mandolin, diminishing until it was lost in a new burst of music, a stringed orchestra from a café, or the weird cry of a boatman as he turned a corner. Nicolo put his arm around Antonia's tightly-laced waist. He tenderly wrapped her *pelisse* closer "o'er her breast's superb abundance." He told her he had never loved before. As he bent over her, she turned her head away modestly—or was it to avoid the breath of a sour stomach?

## XXIV

### A BABY

WHEN people decide to "begin life anew," they always plan to leave where they are and go some place else.

Nicolo and Antonia decided on Sicily, where the warm sun and the gentle sirocco from the Sahara would bring health and peace—and a few concerts might bring some money.

Sicily, however, did not appreciate Paganini's music. The Sicilians, living in the open air, express their relation to the universe in song. Instrumental music, with its concomitants, straight-backed chairs and fetid concert-hall atmosphere, has little appeal.

Occasionally, during his vacation at Palermo, Paganini would run over to Rome and Naples for a few performances to keep the casserole boiling, but for the most part he rested. It was another one of the fuelling periods, so necessary to the sustenance of his flame of life. Though outwardly calm, Paganini gave himself to his music with such complete abandon that "every concert was a nail in his coffin, every pizzicato the last nervous grasp of his stiffening fingers." These interludes, sometimes at spas, occasionally at the estate of a friend, and now and then in seclusion with a woman, served to hold impatient death at bay.

This was his honeymoon. It was not a happy one. If

Antonia Bianchi had remained in Venice, she might have gone down in musical history on the dedication leaf of a great symphony. But what woman is willing to exchange the shadow of a leaf for the substance of a shelter? She was not content to remain a beautiful memory, a bright jewel in the mosaic that was Venice, a breath of perfume to be recollected with closed eyes, a melody to be given to the world. She preferred to transmute herself into petticoats and garlic, headaches and money matters, into solid flesh, more solid each year. She insinuated herself into his life. She slept with him, ate with him, sang and scolded. She did worse, she grew attached to him. The moment preceding her capitulation she was lost. At the first sign of her jealousy he hastened to give her more cause.

After a few months of weary honeymooning, Antonia became hateful to Nicolo—he would have left her without a scruple, but for one thing.

She had the good fortune to be bearing his child—and Paganini wanted, more than wealth or fame or love, the immortality of fatherhood.

On the 23rd of July, in the year 1825, in the city of Palermo, when Nicolo Paganini was in his forty-fourth year, a son was born who was named Achille Cyrus Alexander Paganini.

## XXV

### A TENDENCY TO SMASH VIOLINS

PAGANINI was never a silent sufferer. When the baby was five months old, we find him complaining to Germinio:—

*“Naples, December 17th, 1825.*

“. . . By the way, you must know that the Bianchi, who is still with me, has a great fault. For nothing she goes into a frenzy. The other evening for not having taken her to a certain merchant where I had to stay only a quarter of an hour on personal business, she took my violin case and threw it from high to the floor four times and it broke to pieces. Fortunately my valet, having taken, or rather torn, from her hands the violin, this was saved, and by a miracle I found it sound, though a bit battered.

“Another incident which took place on the evening before last. The Bianchi and I were in the house of certain Spanish people. The son and mother, mistress of said house, called me aside to inform me of the originality of a fanatic dilettante of the violin who was also there. The Bianchi surprised us and, I think out of jealousy, asked to be taken home. On my asking her why, she smacked me very violently, accompanied by shrieks and began to smack all those present.

“She nearly burst with rage and we felt she would lose her reason.”



And again:—

“Antonia was tormented continually by the most frightful jealousy; one day she found herself behind my chair at the moment when I had just filled a page in the album of a great pianist and, having read some amiable words in honor of the artist, she snatched the album from my hands, tore it into pieces and, dancing with rage, she actually wanted to assassinate me.”

Professor Schottky tells the following incident:—

“In a fit of rage against him she took, during his absence, one of his best Cremonian violins and beat it upon the ground until the people living underneath came up and luckily saved the instrument. Not only were all the strings broken but the violin itself had suffered several serious injuries. This reminds me of the famous satirist, Dr. Jonathan Swift, who once found himself in a company where a lady with her dress of state of Mantuan taffeta, threw down a Cremona violin and broke it. Swift immediately called out the words of Virgil: *‘Mantua vae miserae nimium vilina Cremonae!’* (Oh Mantua—that you had to come too near the unhappy Cremona!)’ ”

A few days before leaving for Vienna Paganini wrote to Geremi from Milan:—

“ . . . The Bianchi is finally at peace, having given her a paper for the pension of a hundred Milanese scudi annually for the whole of her life.”

We have no written records of the lady's side of the quarrel, though her confidants, according to Paganini, were “God and Man.”

In spite of the gathering of demoniac clouds about the

head of the violinist, Pope Leo XII decorated him with the Order of the Golden Spur; and the younger Vernet said, "Nicolo Paganini plays Gothic minsters on his violin; his trills are clouds of incense."

The three years preceding Paganini's début in Vienna were crowded with concerts in all the important Italian cities. They were years of development in art and disintegration in tissue. La Bianchi traveled with him, sharing his honors and triumphs, but, according to him not sharing his pains.

At Pavia his concert announcement was as follows:—

### PAGANINI

Farà sentire il suo Violino \*

And in Naples he had himself billed simply as "Filarmonico." This gave rise to a controversy as to whether it was modesty or affectation. Some said it was his intention to mislead people into the belief that he was a member of the Academy of Philharmonics of Bologna. The reply to this was that the Academy would be honored if he condescended to join it.

In Florence "Il Cavaliere Paganini" gave a concert at the Teatro Pergola, which called forth a most aristocratic gathering of that most aristocratic city. It was at Florence that Paganini took another enforced rest, owing to a disease in one of his legs. About this time he contracted a habit which played an important rôle in his daily life and may have had its part in bringing to a close his tortured existence. Someone brought to his attention *Elixir Le Roy*, a patent medicine,

\* Will cause his violin to be heard.

which evidently yielded temporary relief. Paganini came to regard it as a miracle and took doses of it on every possible occasion, and finally without occasion.

As soon as he was able to travel he went to his beloved Milan, where he was received with demonstrations of affection. He gave four musical soirées and two concerts at La Scala, where he played for the first time his *Second Concerto* with the now famous *Rondo Ad Un Campanello*. This is not so fine a composition as the *First Concerto*, though it is a musicianly piece of work.

Paganini's greatest relaxation was spoiling his son. No childish whim was too unreasonable to be gratified and his patience was really maternal. Once, when the child had broken a leg, the doctor ordered absolute repose but no one could keep the little one still. Paganini sat with the child in his lap for eight days, caressing and entertaining him. Finally he became dazed from continual sitting and the doctor insisted on his going out. He had accomplished his purpose, however, for the young bones had knit together properly.

This domestic devotion was restricted to his son. His relations with la Bianchi became increasingly turbulent. While they lived in Palermo, meeting few people, they managed to achieve moments of comparative peace even though the warmth of passion had died, but as soon as they began to travel fresh contacts and constant readjustment to new conditions, created perpetual cause for friction. Paganini charged Bianchi with being mercenary; she accused him of being stingy. They were both right.

Bianchi had no marriage contract to secure her old age. Her artistic future depended on the variable violinist. Her

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only security lay in a bank account. Added to this was her jealousy of the man who said, "I am neither young nor handsome, on the contrary, I am very homely, but when the women hear my music, the appeal of my tones, they all cry, I become their idol and they lie at my feet." This explains her tendency to smash violins. Paganini, on his part, was tired of the little singer whom he had taken under his musical wing and who spread herself over his whole existence. Having developed her voice to its capacity, he lost interest in it. La Bianchi's one hold was her relationship to Achille.



## XXVI

### PAGANINI CROSSES THE ALPS

**B**Y 1828 Paganini had a collection of medals and snuff boxes that was worth a fortune. He had begun several financial investments, under the guidance of Geremi, the nature of which has always remained mysterious. He trusted his friend as unreservedly in business as he did in love affairs.

Among the accusations against Paganini was one that he belonged to the *Carbonari*. This was manifestly absurd in the face of his friendship for Metternich. To him Austria was not a tyrant oppressing his people, it was merely a larger scope for musical triumphs.

To go to Vienna was not entering alien territory. He was a fiddler and the world was his audience. Whatever tongue they spoke, they would understand his language.

"Some people here called *Carbonari*," he wrote to Geremi from Naples, "are beaten on their heads, and not too gently; but to my mind they deserve worse than that."

Up to this time the French public knew little about him, although he was known to a few musicians by a collection of studies for the violin which Andreozzi had brought to Paris and from which Pacini had published his edition. It was rumored among French musicians that the composer of these pieces was actually able to perform them.

Germany, less insular in her art than France, knew all about the "Magician of the South." Not only had the stories of his virtuosity spread to tax the credulity of German violinists, but tales of his weird habits had come to adumbrate the personality of the man.

Paganini's art had matured in a way peculiar to himself. He was an advocate of specialization. Instead of enlarging his repertoire, he perfected it. To dismiss his playing as mere virtuosity is unjust. His technical variations from what had been considered the normal are evidence of imagination, of ingenuity and *esprit*. He not only played with sound as a poet plays with words, but he did what writers only today are beginning to do—he increased the scope of his medium by invention. Paganini took a wooden box with four strings and demonstrated on it the possibilities of the entire orchestra. And in addition he had in the highest degree of perfection the quality which makes of the violin a living thing—its voice—the *cantino*.

Diabolism in connection with Paganini's music means subtlety, wit, hilarity, tenderness, satire, the metamorphoses of ideas—the playing with emotions—sublimity with sparks of hellfire.

Paganini's emaciation was arresting to the well-fed Viennese. His frock coat hung from his shoulders like a garment from a too acute hanger, yet he possessed a grotesque dignity and, when he entered a drawing room or a concert platform, it was with the assurance of a successful man. His movements were as jerky as if controlled by springs. His head, bobbing around in a loose cravat, was coming to resemble more and more his silent partner of the infernal

regions. The eyes seemed to have burned like coals deep into his face. His violin seemed a part of him, an extension of his left arm, the bow a freak elongation of his right index finger.

It was an age of romanticism and reform. Vienna, palpitating between despotism and revolution, was only too ready to seize upon a novelty, while she allowed her own Schubert to sell a trio for twenty florins. Newspapers were beginning to spread fame, and little groups of musicians sat in the coffee houses, punctuating their drinking with criticism. Beethoven was dead and his symphonies living; Rossini, alive and his operas dying.

The stage was set when Paganini, with his violin and his linen, his baby, his snuff boxes, a bottle of *Elixir Le Roy* and la Bianchi, set out from Milan in a special carriage for the Austrian capital, to accept Metternich's invitation. He rode like a great general over conquered territory. Genoa, Milan, Florence were at his feet. He had subdued them with a flourish of the bow. Sprung from Italian soil, he combined in himself the elements to master it. From the early days in the Passage of the Dark Cat he had drawn to himself power and strength. He had become a man and an aristocrat. There were those in the cities through which he passed who condemned his friendship with the International Policeman, who deplored his musical setting of the Austrian National Anthem. Their disapproval did not perturb Paganini. Common people were just animals.

"Familiarity with such people would have dangerous consequences," he often said. No prince could have had greater contempt for the *canaille* than had Paganini. If he were pleased with a coachman, he would say, "That ox drives

well," and if a servant approached him with a request, he would say, "What does that animal want of me?" But for the most part Paganini was the idol of the Italians. They not only admired him, they understood him. They loved him for his gambling, his love affairs, his arrogance. Democracy in so great a man would have been a sign of inferiority. Paganini had not tried to educate their musical taste. He had played the tunes they loved over and over and, like children, they adored nothing so much as repetition. They preferred him as children prefer an indulgent grandfather to a stern parent who acts for their good. Paganini was painted in primary colors and, like their own primitifs, with no perspective. He was not given to abstract philosophy or obtruse meanings. His subtleties were confined to the violin. He spoke the direct truth or an equally direct lie. He had not, like Paër and Cherubini and other Italian musicians, spent most of his time abroad. Nicolo Paganini was in his forty-seventh year and this was the first time he was leaving his native land.

It was six years before he returned. Six years of strange loves, incomprehensible tongues, physical pain, six years of shaky coaches, cold hotels, foreign cuisines; of bitter enmities and unprecedented triumphs.

The Germans were musicians. They had never been taken in by the florid Italian school. Bach was their alphabet and Beethoven was becoming their primer. No one knew this better than Paganini. It was in fear and trembling that he crossed the Alps.



## PART TWO—ABROAD





## XXVII

### VIENNA À LA PAGANINI

PAGANINI gave his first Vienna concert on March 29th, three days after Schubert's only concert. The Viennese musical world was present—Mayseder, Jansa, Slavick, Leon de St. Lubin, Strelinger, Bohm, Schubert, Grillparzer, von Spaun, the Esterhazy family. The concert was announced for eleven-thirty in the morning and at nine the Redouten Saal was beginning to fill up. The enthusiasm verged on hysterical frenzy.

Paganini dispelled all doubts at the first stroke of the bow. The public became wild, the press ecstatic. Other violinists were confounded by the musical mystery.

"The great novelty and prodigy of the day is one M. Paganini, an Italian, on the violin," wrote the correspondent for the *Harmonicon*. "He is, without contradiction, not only the finest player on the violin, but no other performer, upon what instrument soever, can be styled his equal: Kalkbrenner, Rode, Romberg, Moscheles, Jew and Gentile, are his inferiors by at least some thousand degrees; they are not fit, as we say in Germany, to *reach him water*. He is the Mathews of the violin, performs a whole concert on a single string, where you are sure to hear, besides his own instrument, a harp, a guitar, and a flute. In one word, he is a necromancer, and bids fair to beat *la Giraffe*."

The giraffe refers to a gift of the Pasha of Egypt to Emperor Francis. This exaggerated animal, new to Europe, had been the sensation of Vienna and the chief topic of conversation in drawing rooms. Modes and confections were *à la giraffe* until they were superseded by an even greater oddity and became *à la Paganini*.

The violinist went into a shop one day to purchase a pair of gloves.

"*A la giraffe?*" asked the salesman.

"No, no, some other animal," said Paganini, thinking he referred to the leather.

"How about gloves *à la Paganini?*"

Paganini gave numerous concerts, each one crowding the hall to capacity. The criticisms were hyperbolic to the verge of absurdity:—

The *Theaterzeitung* of the 24th of April reports:—"The audience was hypnotized. The swaying of the rushing applause was coupled with the enthusiastic cries of approval. Paganini has succeeded in lifting the most artificial to the highest limit of art. By Paganini's playing one is reminded of the effect of the music of ancient times. If he had let himself be heard before the assembled Greeks on the Isthmus or on Olympus, surely an altar would have been erected for him."

"Never has an artist caused such a great sensation within our walls as this God of the Violin; never has the public so gladly carried its money to a concert as to his, and never, as far as I can remember, has the fame of a virtuoso spread to the lowest classes of the population as has his. After his first two concerts there was only one name, his, on all lips

and it was as though political art, society and city news held no more interest for the people, for over everything else they became dumb, and only Paganini was the subject of all thought and conversation, and tradesmen told each other only about this phenomenon, and I believe even the children forgot their toys over it," wrote Castelli.

Paganini's success in Vienna continued without abatement. Prince Metternich entertained him and though he spoke no German, he was invited to all the great salons. When he came upon people who spoke Italian, he became voluble, almost boisterous.

He who could play any melody after hearing it once, who never forgot a name or a face, could not remember a German word, or the names of the cities in which he played. He later acquired a fair knowledge of French, but English and German made absolutely no impression on him.

Paganini was drawn, etched and modeled by all the artists of the day; the shop windows were full of portraits and caricatures. His face was to be seen on snuff boxes, cigar boxes, vanity cases. His effigy topped the walking sticks of dandies or appeared in butter and sugar on banquet tables. *Auflaufy à la Paganini* was the favorite sweetmeat and a good stroke at billiards was a *coup à la Paganini*. Dresses and hats indicated their smartness by his name, verses and acrostics appeared in every publication, and cab drivers told their fare in Paganinis—five Gulden to a Paganini.

In May the Theater an der Wien was enriched by a sketch called *The False Virtuoso*, or *The Concert on the G String*, given for the purpose "of celebrating the unattainable heights of this virtuoso in humorous attire, and besides, to provide

a full cash box for the management." *Der Sammler* reviews the performance:

"Those who have tried to find a parody or an attempt to offend have been sorely mistaken. The intrigue is about like that in the *False Primadonna* and consists of a confusion of the virtuoso with a poor musician, who uses the name to quiet his hunger and so gets himself into a series of embarrassing situations, which have in themselves a humorous effect, which is heightened by the advent of his wife who is following him, and the appearance of the real artist, and which ends in a frank and comical admission of his deceit. The author knew how to work up this simple plot so cleverly and with so much humor that many were satisfied and expressed their approval loudly during, as well as after, the production. The music consists mostly of well known motives but deserves praise for its clever assembling. This can be said particularly of the overture, which was greeted with a storm of applause."

Paganini kept the home folks informed of his grandeur. On July 5th he wrote to Germinio:—

"I would have given the fourteenth accademia if I hadn't been feeling ill; if not the coming week, I shall give it the one following so as to give in to the insistent urging I receive from Her Majesty the Archduchess Maria Louisa, whom I must advise when I recover. The wish to hear me again will always remain in those who have already heard me. How many Paganinis do they think there are in the world?"

Paganini was at home on the Prater. Though he spoke not a word of their language, he understood the gay and autocratic Viennese. He responded to their praise and if he

did not understand their after-dinner speeches, he knew enough to drink their toasts.

Domestic affairs were not going well and la Bianchi was getting the public's sympathy. Everyone knows what it means to live with an artist! She complained to Signor Domenico Artaria, Paganini's manager, who kindly headed a group of indignant citizens who compelled the artist to give a concert for the benefit of his abused mistress. He gave the concert but decided afterwards that the entire receipts were too much for Bianchi. He offered her half. She refused in the dialect of the canals. Lacking confidence in him, she demanded a single payment instead of the annuity which he had granted her. In addition to this she thought she had discovered new cause for jealousy and the scene between them was tempestuous. The hotel employees, listening in the corridor, did not have to understand Italian to know what was going on.

This was the last quarrel. Bianchi packed her things and returned to Milan and Paganini seized his writing tablet and relieved his mind in a letter to Germi:—

"You believe that this woman was useful to me in time of illness; my dear, just when I am sick I feel the advantage of not having her around. It may have been the lack of heart, of sense, but just on such occasions she never did that which was particularly necessary. The wretch never wanted to practice and complained at the least bit of work that I treated her like a slave. She told God and man stories of her shame. In vain did I try to restrain her. Always anew in everything she did she annoyed me. To tell all of this sad story would be too long and too bitter. When I made her



acquaintance, she was a little unknown singer. I made her appear in concerts. She had hardly a shirt to wear; now she possesses an elaborate wardrobe, jewels, and money. She embittered my life as long as she was with me; now that I am rid of her, I know that she only desires to make me appear bad. The just people will judge between her and me. To a friend like you I wanted to pour out my heart; not to justify myself, but that I should feel easier."

And later:—

"As I just told you, the Bianchi always became more unreasonable; she played all kinds of tricks on me. She became ridiculously arrogant and out of greed for two thousand Thalers she left me not a moment's peace and one evening she deserted me and her son and returned to Milan with the jewels I had bought her, and all the money. If you should accidentally see her and hear her, do not believe her stories of me. Achille is lovable and beautiful; he is always with me and he it is that keeps me alive."

On July 5th:—

". . . the Bianchi has not been living with me for some time and I don't want to hear about her again."

And on October 20th from Prague:—

"In Carlsbad I have been very unhappy. All is finished with the Bianchi. I had recourse to the Tribunal in Vienna in order to have under my custody my dear son Achille who is getting very precious for the sensibility and cleverness he is showing. I thought it well to accept the proposition of the Bianchi and I have paid her the sum of two thousand Milanese scudi. She has thus renounced her rights, and the obli-

gation of paying her the annuity of four hundred scudi for the rest of her life was annulled. . . .”

Vienna was ever after associated in Paganini's mind with a friendly public, the Hahnemann Homeopathic Treatment, and the loss of Bianchi.

He gave a benefit concert for the poor for which the Emperor sent him a diploma and made him *Kammer Virtuoso*, a post carrying honors without duties. He also presented the artist with a gold snuff box set with precious stones and further honored him by attending his farewell concert on the 24th of July. During this frenzy Schubert was dying. Bauernfeld makes a comparison:—

“The total sum which Schubert made by his compositions in the entire course of his life amounted to the equivalent of five hundred and seventy-five pounds. For that sum he composed considerably more than a thousand songs, symphonies, operas, dances and all forms of music. During the last year of Schubert's life Paganini gave eight concerts in Vienna and received in a few weeks the same sum as Schubert earned by all his work. Verily, the favors of music were distributed with a strange sense of justice.”

In his *Alt Wien* he mentions it again:—

“After the eighth concert he (Paganini) had already earned twenty thousand gulden. He only had to cancel one of his concerts due to the fact that at the Zoological Garden at Schönbrunn there was a giraffe to be seen for the first time, which had all Vienna on tip toe. Because a giraffe, after all, meant more to the Viennese than did Paganini. The five gulden that this concert corsair demanded I was unable to scrape together. That Schubert had to hear him went without

saying, but he absolutely refused to hear him again without me and was highly insulted when I hesitated to accept the ticket he offered me.

" 'Nonsense,' he cried, 'I have heard him once already and was very annoyed that you weren't with me! I tell you such a man will not come again. I now have money like chaff, so come along.'

"With those words he dragged me with him. We then heard the infernally-heavenly violinist and were no less transported by his wonderful Adagio than surprised at his other devilish arts and humorously impressed by his comical way of bowing and demoniac looking figure which resembled a skinny black puppet strung on wires. In the customary manner I was treated after the concert at a restaurant, and an extra bottle was drunk in the name of enthusiasm."

It was just a year since Beethoven had died to the obligato of a thunder storm. Paganini attended a concert where the *Seventh Symphony* was played. The riotous merriment of the finale brought tears to his eyes, as we weep at recalling the laughter of one who is dead.

As he was leaving the concert hall he said, sadly, "*E morto.*"

The Chief Magistrate had presented him with the gold medal of San-Salvador, but as this was an honor susceptible of being shared, a special medal was struck off with a relief portrait on one side, with the inscription:

NICOLAO PAGANINI  
VINDOBONA  
MDCCCXXVIII

and on the back the words:

*Perituris Sonis non Peritura Gloria,*

surrounding an open music book with the theme of the Campanella and the Guarnerius wreathed in laurel. This was the city's parting gift.

## XXVIII

### THE CONQUEST OF GERMANY

PAGANINI went to Prague by way of Carlsbad, where he stopped to take the cure and to pay for it by giving a concert. His failure in Prague was due to his success in Vienna. Prague and Vienna, as in Mozart's time, were rivals in matters of art and it was customary for one to condemn what the other had applauded. In the *Revue Musicale* under the department of Foreign News we find:—

“In spite of the immense success obtained by the virtuoso in Vienna, there are found among the Germans those who do not join his admirers. One musical gazette contained lately a letter in which it was said that there was nothing astonishing about the success of this man at Vienna, formerly the center of good music. The author adds that it was impossible for a person gifted with taste and reason to be pleased with these apparent harlequinades, after having heard veritable violinists of the epoch, Spohr, Baillot, Lafont, etc. According to the author of this letter, Paganini did not know how to handle his bow, but he had an immense facility in the left hand. All his variations are of the same nature, and are followed by an inevitable pizzicato. For the rest, absolute ignorance of the manner of properly phrasing an adagio. There is nothing more pathetic than the self-styled music which he composes. His piece *La Clochette*,

which has turned all the heads in Vienna, consists of nothing but two or three rings of a bell which he has struck in the orchestra before commencing an extraordinary web of extravagances. Finally, if one is to believe the author of this letter, at the city of Prague, where there are nothing but connoisseurs, his first concert, only, sold out the house; the public made it clear to him in the succeeding ones that if he continued, he would end by not having anyone."

Another Prague critic, the correspondent of the *Hamburger Boersenhalle*, is even more harsh:—

"Oh, foolish world; oh, wonderful taste; oh, enthusiastic Viennese! Never was I so suddenly disappointed in my highest expectations as through this—virtuoso! I attended one of his concerts but he shall never see me again. The principal things which always repeat themselves are an unbearable, disgusting squeak which is not a regular tone but simply the twitter of sparrows, and then, at the end of every variation a rapid pizzicato, with the left hand, of six tones. His presentation is neither particularly good nor tasteful; his tone is weak, without fullness, and, if he exerts himself particularly, it is rough. The flageolet tones often turn into screeching sounds. His cadenzas are bad taste in the highest degree and partly old-fashioned. A true art is the playing on the G string. As he uses only one finger for this, there results a horrible sound of mewing and bawling due to the fact that the finger slides back and forth, which seems to give Herr Paganini particular pleasure. His greatest weakness: poor presentation of the adagio as the adagios by Kreutzer and Rode were replaced by works of his own, after he had put aside those which were uncomfortable for him to play. In



respect to the so-called *Tempest* which Paganini gave at his farewell concert, I should say that without the theatrical scenery it would have left the audience cold. But with the decoration and the deplorable machinery, the See-and-Hear-play was made into a regular brawl and caused laughter from one part and rage from the other part of the audience. It was also an unworthy thing for the true artist to sit in the orchestra and from there accompany the wild things going on upon the stage. More trivial even than Paganini's playing was the composition itself, which was by a certain Mr. Panny, whose name the program did not even mention."

Mr. Panny is not so negligible as this critic supposed. There are musicians today who believe that Panny had something to do with the First Paganini Concerto. With the exception of the *Twenty-Four Caprices* and the *First Concerto*, Paganini's compositions belong to the Market-Place-in-Bagdad School of Music. For the most part they imitated the simple sounds of nature, from the roar of the ocean to the squeak of a chicken in a barn-yard. And yet, in the midst of all this *Schauspielerei*, we find passages of real beauty and musicianship, and when we judge him we must remember that our banalities were his innovations.

Shortly after a London critic wrote:—

"Nothing can be more intense in feeling than his conception and delivery of an adagio passage," which merely proves the latitude of music criticism.

Paganini did find one friend and defender in Prague, however, in the form of Professor Schottky, to whose famous book all subsequent biographers are indebted. He made arrangements with Schottky to write the story in order to

combat the calumnies which were increasing rapidly and the "poisoned Prague newspaper articles."

Through Dresden and Leipzig Paganini played his way to Berlin, and from there he writes a friend in Prague:—

*Berlin, March 10th, 1829*

"With impatience I await my biography, not to make myself famous but to hush up the detrimental reports that seek to blacken my honor through false accusations, because they cannot or do not understand how to lower my art. What is Professor Schottky doing? I have written to him from here but have not received an answer as yet. (The letters had crossed each other.) In the meantime the crowd continues to tell these lovely stories; and it is absolutely necessary that I, as well as he, should place an obstacle in the path of these empty words. Gladly do I wish to retract the information about the comedy that has been made on my name, and which, I believe, is called *The False Virtuoso*. Will you have the goodness to tell me something of its contents? I hope it has not been written to insult me as I am not aware of having done anything to merit this. Recommend me to the Professor and tell him that all my friends are anxious to see his work. Through the same my honor shall become better known and the truth shall be the lock on the mouth of blackmail."

Whether it was musical discrimination, patriotic antagonism, or resentment at the high prices, we cannot say, but the fact remains that only the first concert was well attended. Paganini was annoyed. He published a letter which he had received from his mother in the *Quarterly Musical*

*Magazine and Review* to try to prove that he was not only of human origin but the son of a *gemütlich* and loving mother:—

*Dearest Son:*

At last, after seven months have elapsed since I wrote you at Milan, I had the happiness of receiving your letter of the 9th inst. through the intermediary of Signor Agnino, and was much rejoiced to find that you were in the enjoyment of good health. I am also delighted to find that, after your travels to Paris and London, you purpose visiting Genoa expressly to embrace me. I assure you, my prayers are daily offered up to the Most High, that my health may be sustained, also yours, so that my desire may be realized.

My dream has been fulfilled, and that which God promised me has been accomplished. Your name is great, and art, with the help of God, has placed you in a position of independence. Beloved, esteemed by your fellow citizens, you will find on my bosom and those of your friends, that repose which your health demands.

The portraits which accompanied your letter have given me great pleasure. I had seen in the papers all the accounts you give me of yourself. You may imagine, as your mother, what an infinite source of joy it was to me. Dear son, I entreat you to continue to inform me of all that concerns you, for with this assurance I shall feel that it will prolong my days, and be convinced that I shall still have the happiness of embracing you.

We are all well. In the name of your relations, I thank you for the sums of money you have sent. Omit nothing that will render your name immortal. Eschew the vices of great cities, remembering that you have a mother who loves you affectionately, and whose fondest aspirations are your health and happiness. She

will never cease her supplications to the All-powerful for your preservation.

Embrace your amiable companion for me, and kiss little Achille. Love me as I love you.

Your affectionate mother,

*July 21st, 1828.*

TERESA PAGANINI.

As Teresa Paganini could not write, this letter was either from Germi's hand or that of a public letter-writer.

Prague made other attacks on Paganini and one of the worst was on his jawbone. An inexpert or, as Paganini termed it, "a jackassical dental operation," caused the inflammation of his lower jaw. As a result of this, he lost the entire lower row of teeth. The inflammation of the larynx, which was to trouble him so much in the future and which was the immediate cause of his death, set in at this time.

It is amazing to note the frequency of his concerts, in view of his poor health and the fact that travel was dependent on horses:—

March 4th—First Concert in Berlin

" 13th—Second " " "

April 6th—Benefit Concert

" 29th—Benefit Concert for the City of Danzig

May 13th—Tenth and Farewell Concert in Berlin

" 23rd—First Concert in Warsaw

July 19th—Tenth Concert in Warsaw and Farewell Banquet

" 24th to 28th—Concerts in Breslau

August/September—Frankfort a. Main (six concerts). From  
here concerts in Darmstadt, Mainz,  
Mannheim.

October 6, 9, 12, 15th—Concerts in Leipzig

October 14th—Concert in Halle

“ 17th— “ “ Magdeburg

“ 20th— “ “ Halberstadt

“ 26th— “ “ Dessau

“ 31st— “ “ Weimar

November—Concerts in Erfurt, Gotha, Rudolstadt, Coburg,  
Bamberg, Regensburg

“ 9, 12th—Nürnberg

“ 17-26th—Munich (three concerts) and at Court in  
Tegernsee

“ 28, 30th—Augsburg

December 7th—Stuttgart

“ 18th—Concert in Frankfurt

Through all his travels he was accompanied by his son, and it became a familiar sight to see him go from his hotel to the concert hall, carrying the boy, both enveloped in an enormous fur coat. When Achille's head would come out for air, his father would tenderly push it back, fearing that the severe German climate would give the boy a cold.

Each city in which Paganini played has its anecdote. At a musical evening in Berlin to which he was invited as guest, a young professor of the violin performed several pieces, being unaware of the presence of the virtuoso. Paganini was then importuned to play and declined at first, but finally permitted himself to be coaxed. He played a few variations in a wretched style and those who were ignorant of his identity snickered for one reason, those who knew him, for another. The young professor, encouraged, stepped forward, took the violin and proceeded to show this Italian how to play. This was just what Paganini was fiendishly



waiting for. When the professor was finished, he shouted "*Bravissimo*," and, taking the violin, he played a short piece with his most difficult technical feats, and in his grade A manner. Needless to say, the audience was spellbound and word passed from mouth to mouth that it was the great Paganini. They say the young professor disappeared in the crowd and was never seen in that house again.

Berlin was the stronghold of the anti-Rossini cabal. Paganini would have received little attention had not his old friend of the Roman Carnival, Meyerbeer, smoothed the way by putting the Court and Society into receptive frames of mind. The opera house was given him when he appealed, "My poor state of health forces me to utilize the time as my ailments allow me only moments of peace."

On his first appearance the preponderance of the enemy in the audience caused a cold reception, but as usual his matchless performance won them over.

"I found in frosty Berlin a theatrical direction, virtuosi, etc., who behaved decently, over which I am very much surprised and for which I am thankful. The foes of Spontini and Meyerbeer were, of course, also mine, before they ever heard me. They showed themselves hostile even in the concert hall but even after the first twenty-five bars they began, without noticing it themselves, to applaud enthusiastically. The enthusiasm became so great that I could hardly continue to play. I am at present occupied with composing, as a surprise for the king, variations on the National Anthem. I am enjoying myself immensely here, particularly at the great operas, whose worth one cannot imagine without having been present personally. Spontini and Meyerbeer have



loaded me with kindnesses and helped me wherever they possibly could."

The press comments damage the myth that the Teutons are a less enthusiastic race than the Latins:

Paganini is a prodigy; and all that the most celebrated violinists have executed heretofore is mere child's play. He executed an air, quite *sostenuto*, on one string, while at the same time a tremolo accompaniment upon the next was perfectly perceptible, as well as a very lively *pizzicato* upon the fourth string: he executed runs of octaves on the single string of G with as much promptitude, precision and firmness as other violinists on two. He is able to render the four strings of the instrument available to such a degree as to form concatenations of chords that could be heard together, and that produced as full and complete harmony as that of six fingers of a pianoforte player, moreover, in moments of the most daring vivacity, every one of his notes had all the roundness and sonorousness of a bell!

Rellstab, Berlin's most prominent critic, wrote:—

I have heard it but nevertheless I do not believe it. All great violinists have something, have a style, one can follow them; the powerful Spohr, the sweet Polledro, the fiery Lipinski, the elegant Lafont only managed to draw admiration from me. But, Paganini is not himself; he is eagerness, mockery, insanity, and glowing pain. . . . He scratches and saws at times entirely unexpectedly, as though he were ashamed of having admitted the possession of a high and noble feeling, and in that moment, just as you wish to turn away in anger, he has already bound the soul with a golden thread and threatens to tear it out of your body. . . . He does not master any difficulties because for him none exist; double-stops are child's play; he only uses them to rest, but three- and four-part

chords, they are worth mentioning. . . . The audience began to play along. Single sighs and breaths of the bow were accompanied by the dull murmuring of the people, otherwise nothing stirred. As he finally repeated the melody in whispered tones, it was as though he were alone in the hall; each one held his breath for fear that the violinist's breath would give out. But as the final trill came, the shouting broke out. The ladies leaned over the railings of the balcony to show that they were applauding; the men stood on the chairs to see him and call to him; I have never seen the people of Berlin so. A fur coat was brought to him; he wrapped himself in it, pale as death, dried the perspiration from his forehead and almost sank into a chair.

Marx of the *Musikzeitung*, the only critic whose opinion Beethoven valued, was equally enthusiastic.

Saphir, the satirist, was indignant at not having received complimentary tickets. He complained in the *Schnellpost* in an article called "Paganini, Two Thalers and I," and concluded by saying:

" . . . We are both right—he, on a single string (*saite*) and I, on several pages (*seiten*)."

"Weighted down with laurels and florins," Paganini arrived in Munich. The attendance at his first concert was not all that could be expected, but he achieved such success with those present that at the second and third concerts the house was crowded and many of the royal family were present. After the last encore he was recalled to the stage and crowned with a wreath by Director Stuntz, while copies of a prize poem fluttered down from above. Paganini was so touched that he put his arms around Herr Stuntz and kissed him, and,

according to the papers, "the echo of his tears gleamed in a thousand eyes."

He gave a benefit concert for the flooded city of Danzig, at which His Majesty Friedrich Wilhelm was present. Paganini played for the occasion his own variations on *Heil dir im Siegerkranz* and was rewarded by the title of Honorary Concert Master and a letter from the King:

"I have resolved to give you, before your departure from my capital, a token of the satisfaction which I have experienced in being present at your concert. Nature has endowed you with a rare talent, which you have cultivated with an original spirit. The tones which you draw forth from some strings come from the soul and excite in the hearts of your listeners rare emotions. I have named you my First Honorary Concert Master and authorize you to bear that title."

Paganini would have preferred something more substantial, such as a medal. A few weeks after leaving Berlin, he petitioned Prince Radziwill to obtain one for him:

"It is not conceit that influences me to do this, but I understand how to appreciate the worth of it, if it comes from the hands of so great a ruler and it seems to me to be the best answer for those who will not stop inventing frauds to black-mail me. My honor and peace are, therefore, in your hands and your friendliness alone can furnish this greatest of all consolations."

The Queen invited him to play at her castle at Tegernsee. Shortly after his arrival there was a great tumult outside the gates. The queen inquired the cause of the uproar and learned that about sixty peasants from the neighborhood, having heard of the arrival of the great violinist, had come

in the hope of hearing him, and now demanded that the windows be left open. The Queen gave orders to admit them to the entrance hall, where, Paganini says, "they were noticeable, not only for the judgment which they showed in applauding, but by their genteel behavior."

## XXIX

### PAGANINI THE MISER

AFTER Paganini's operation on his jawbone in Prague one of the physicians repeatedly expressed the desire to hear the artist play.

"Let me see if you can handle the bow," he said.

Paganini, after exhausting his list of excuses, picked up the instrument in one hand and flourished the bow in the other. He replaced them in the case saying, "What do you think of my performance? You see I can handle the bow."

This is regarded as an example of Paganini's humor.

Stories of his monetary as well as his artistic avarice were spreading. There is one that his laundress asked for a ticket to his concert. He gave her one in the gallery and, at the end of the week, deducted the amount from his laundry bill. He stayed at the best hotels, drank the best wine. It was in the matter of tips that he exercised economy. In Italy he had been known as *Signor Paganienti* (Paynothing).

We know that he supported his mother and made many gifts to other members of his family, including liberal dowries to his sister and niece. Even after he realized that they were taking advantage of him, he continued to make liberal gifts. Long after his death records were found of donations to charitable organizations which he never mentioned.

Paganini felt it necessary to publish a letter from Johann

N. Stiepaneck, the director of the theater at Prague, to prove his financial integrity:—

“I declare with pleasure and truthfully that in all my financial relations with this excellent virtuoso in the theater of this city in which he gave six concerts, I have learned to know him not otherwise than as a man to be respected, who honored me with the greatest confidence and friendly frankness, and that he was far removed from any petty desire for gain. His memory will always remain sacred to me, and I should be well satisfied and feel compensated if my voice were to help in naming him a worthy business man with whom it is not at all difficult to get along on friendly terms, though opinion is, here and there, I don’t know for what reason, to the contrary.”

While he had little sympathy with people for their poverty alone, he was always kind to artists and music students, giving tickets to his concerts with a musical discrimination to which he surely was entitled. One story of his generosity has been often repeated:—

One day, while walking in the streets of Vienna, Paganini saw a poor boy playing a fiddle. He stopped to speak to the child and found that he was the support of his mother and little sisters and brothers. Paganini took the boy’s violin and began to play. Soon a crowd gathered around and Paganini, taking off his hat, took up a collection, which he gave to the boy.

He also played samaritan to a cab driver:—

“I was on the streets of Vienna. I left my hotel and walked slowly without objective, regarding the gay heads of the Austrians, blonde and square, when the rain and the



wind surprised me suddenly in a faubourg about half a league from home. I had but one alternative and that was to take a carriage. I stopped successively three gondoles, but the drivers, not understanding the language I spoke, continued their courses. The fourth one had just passed; the rain was falling heavily. This time the coachman understood me. He was Italian. In mounting I wished to make a price with him and asked:

“ ‘How much do you want to take me to my hotel?’

“ ‘Five florins,’ said he, ‘the price of a ticket for a concert of Paganini.’

“ ‘*Coquin* that you are,’ I replied, ‘how dare you ask five florins for such a little trip?’

“ ‘Paganini gets it and only plays on a single string.’

“ ‘But you, are you able to drive your carriage on a single wheel?’

“ ‘But, Monsieur, it is not so difficult as one pretends to play on a single string. I am a musician, and today I have doubled the price of my fares in order to go to hear this gentleman whom they call Paganini.’

“ ‘I did not bargain further. The coachman conducted me conscientiously; in ten minutes I arrived before the door of my hotel. I took out five florins from my purse and a ticket from my portfolio.

“ ‘There, here is the sum you have demanded,’ said I to the coachman, ‘and in addition a ticket to go and hear this man Paganini tomorrow at the Saal Philharmonique.’

“ ‘The next evening at eight o’clock the crowd was pressing around the doors of the Saal where I was to be heard. I was about to enter when a commissaire called me, saying:

“ ‘There is a man at the door *im jacquet* who wishes to enter by force.’

“I followed the commissaire. It was the coachman. He shouted that he had been made a present of his seat and that no one could refuse him admission. I had the prohibition removed and in spite of his jacket, his large boots, badly waxed, I had him admitted, thinking he would be lost in the crowd.

“To my great astonishment, as soon as I appeared on the platform, I perceived before me the coachman who produced a great sensation by the contrast which his clothes and his face offered to the pretty, dainty and rich attire of the ladies seated in the first gallery. Each of my pieces was applauded with enthusiasm. I made a great success but the man in the balcony had at least as great a success as I. He clapped his hands and cried in the middle of a piece when everybody else was silent. His gestures, his cries, his applause, which reached delirium, attracted an absurd amount of attention. The evening ended, thank heaven, without accident.

“The next day, upon arising, they announced that a man wished to speak with me; he would not give his name and as I delayed in replying, I saw enter the same individual who had excited so much hilarity at my concert. My first impulse was to have him thrown down the stairs, but he had such an humble air that I did not have the heart.

“ ‘*Diavolo*, what do you want?’

“ ‘Excellence,’ he replied, ‘I have come to ask a favor of you, a great favor. I am the father of four children. I am poor. I am your compatriot. You are rich. You have a repu-

tation without equal. If you wish, you can make my fortune.'

" 'What do you wish me to do?'

" 'Authorize me to write in large characters behind my carriage these words: *Droschke von Paganini*.'

" 'Go to the devil! Do whatever you like!'

"This man was neither a fool nor an idiot. In a few months he became better known in Vienna than I was myself. With this inscription, which I did not forbid him to use, he made a considerable fortune. Two years after I returned to Vienna. The coachman had bought a hotel, where I stayed. In two years his fortune was raised to one hundred thousand francs and he had sold the cabriolet for fifty thousand francs to a rich English lord."

Some years later Paganini gave a concert in a small French city, the receipts of which were ten thousand francs. He decided the next day to treat himself to a *gilet* of black cashmere. A friend, Monsieur Hédouin, offered to take him to his tailor.

"No, no," said he, "*mio caro avvocato*, take me to the shop of a dealer in old clothes."

They searched the old quarter of the town and found a Monsieur Morel, who combined the business of *fripier* with that of theatrical costumer. For three quarters of an hour Paganini disputed to obtain a reduction of one franc on the price of a *gilet* costing ten.

"It would be difficult to get an idea of all the resources which he employed to finally attain his end, says Hédouin. "Annoyed by this debate and finding something superlatively ridiculous on the part of a great artist, I declared, to

end the matter, that I would settle the difference between the sum demanded and that offered. He then gave in, to the satisfaction of the *fripier*, but in doing so made a grimace truly diabolical. On leaving the shop, he said to me:

“‘You have never then read the Memoirs of Signor Marmontel, because you are astonished at what I have just done.’

“‘I have read Marmontel,’ I replied to him. ‘I see what you are driving at, but you forget, my dear Master, that Voltaire made it a question of *amour-propre* to achieve a victory over a Jew and offered in exchange for the six pounds the most generous compensation. He went so far as to promise him very seriously the dowry for one of his daughters. Is it thus that you acted toward the poor *fripier*?’ ”

Monsieur Hédouin also tells of calling on Paganini one morning as he was dressing. He violates the sanctity of the boudoir to the extent of telling us that the artist wore an old flannel shirt patched by himself.

He joked about it and Paganini replied: “*Signor Avvocato*, I see that you lack sentiment on this point. An old piece of clothing to me is an old friend. I attach myself to it and do not wish to be separated.”

Having suffered acutely from poverty in his youth, no amount of wealth could eradicate the fear of it. Paganini knew only too well that his bank account depended upon his bow, and his bow depended upon his precarious strength. He wanted to spare Achille the hardships of his own childhood. Though he bargained for his own clothes, he bought the best he could find for the boy and no toy was too ex-

pensive. In spite of his wandering life, or perhaps because of it, Achille received a good education; when he was seven years old, he spoke German, French and English and acted as interpreter for his father. Paganini never permitted anyone else to wash and dress the child.

He never forced the child to do anything. Someone asked if he were going to teach the boy music.

"Why not, if his interest increases?"

When later the child showed a talent for drawing, it was through his own desire that he developed it.

As soon as Paganini had made final financial disposition of Bianchi, he adopted Achille legally. The illegitimate mother was wiped out of the annals of the Paganini family, and now not a picture of her is to be found in the Villa Gajone, nor is her name mentioned.

It might be said of Paganini, as Liszt said of von Bülow, that he "had no talent as a married man." All his tenderness, his protective instinct, took the form of love for his child.

Achille was a handsome and talented child and he was shamefully spoiled.

"Achillino becomes more beautiful every day; he pleases everyone and the ladies are rivals for his favor. He is my consolation and my entire joy," he wrote to a friend in Vienna.

Professor Schottky tells of how he once called to take Paganini to dine. The room was in great confusion—a violin on the table, another upon a chair, manuscript music scattered over the floor, a snuff box overturned on the bed, toys, money, letters and articles of clothing distributed all



over the room; all the furniture was out of place. Something was very wrong. Paganini, the center of this disorder, sat, "a black silk cap covered his blacker hair, a yellow tie was loose about his neck, a long chocolate colored jacket hung from his shoulders. On his knee he held Achillino, his four year old son, who was in a very bad humor, because he had just been obliged to submit to having his hands washed." Paganini turned apologetically to his visitor.

"The poor child is bored. I am already exhausted from playing with him so much. I duelled with him all morning; I carried him around; I made chocolate for him, and now I am at a loss what to do next."

It was a common sight for visitors to come in and find the little Paganini and the big one with crossed swords. The little one was never satisfied until his adversary had died vociferously several times.

Paganini was only late for a performance on one occasion. As usual, he had left his dressing until the last moment. When his carriage was announced, he began to make his toilette, but found that various articles of apparel had disappeared from their usual places. The unconcerned air of Paganini the younger, who sat quietly looking through a book for the first time in his life, aroused his father's suspicion.

"Where have you hidden my things, *Achillino mio?*" asked Nicolo.

"What things?"

Then followed a search. A shoe was discovered under a pillow; a cravat peeped from the mattress; the waistcoat was sandwiched among sheets of music and the coat was in



an old trunk. Whenever Paganini looked in a place where nothing was hidden, the boy shrieked with laughter, but he was not laughing at the man who shambled around, partially attired, donning each garment as he found it. The handsome Achille was quite accustomed to his father's grotesqueness.

In Berlin some admirers of Paganini pleaded to be allowed custody of Achille for a few hours. They did not bring the boy back at the appointed time and Paganini worked himself up into a nervous terror. The people with whom he was at the time did all they could to distract him. He became convinced that some terrible accident had befallen the child and underwent all the tortures of a nervous mother. After the boy was brought back, he held him tenderly in his arms and would not let him go. He talked incessantly the rest of the evening, as he often did when he was particularly happy. But his conversation never strayed far from his son.

The child was gifted with a rare physical beauty—a pale oval face, brown hawk eyes and long parted hair. Even as a young boy he showed intelligence and judgment and he was fortunate enough to inherit his mother's lovely voice. He could play pretty melodies on the violin, but he never took life seriously enough to concentrate on study. No one had access to the violinist who was not in good standing with his son. Women who wanted to attract the attention of the celebrity learned to gush over the boy. Achille soon knew how to tyrannize over his father with ingratitude, but Paganini's was a love that did not demand gratitude. He never complained. He wrote to Donizetti:—

"Achille is my greatest delight. He is developing wonderfully in beauty and talent. He already speaks perfect German and serves me as translator. He loves me tenderly and I, I idolize him."

## XXX

### ON THE ROAD

PAGANINI spent three nomadic years in Austria, Germany, Poland, and Bohemia, building up his fame and breaking down his vitality. When he could endure no more, he would take a cure at Wiesbaden or Ems, giving a concert to defray the expense. George Harrys, an Englishman, attaché of the Court of Hanover, accompanied him for several months as secretary and interpreter and subsequently published a little volume called *Paganini in Seinem Reise-wagen und Zimmer*.

Paganini never accustomed himself to the German climate and traveled in his fur coat even in summer. Before starting on a journey he would take a little soup or a cup of chocolate. If he departed early in the morning, he took nothing and frequently fasted for the whole day.

Sitting with closed eyes in the corner of the diligence, wrapped in his fur coat, he would demand that all the windows be closed. None of the passengers complained no matter how warm the day. He would sleep for an hour or two, his nose buried in fur. Then he would open his eyes, but seem to see nothing about him. He paid no attention to scenery. If one of the passengers pointed out a landscape, he would say, "It is very pretty," without even glancing at it. The various occurrences of the road which absorb most

travelers did not touch Paganini. When the coach stopped to change horses, he would either remain in his corner or get out and pace up and down, impatient at the delay. He never stopped in at an inn to drink with the other travelers. He never left his luggage out of his sight. It consisted generally of an old carpet bag, a hat box, and a battered violin case, whose ample plush lining protected not only his Guarnerius but a change of underwear and his jewels. His papers he kept in the small red book, which contained his accounts. In a fine handwriting, rendered inviolate by its illegibility, he wrote, day by day, a record of concert receipts and expenses. There is no record of tips. It is said that when hotel employees approached him, he pretended not to understand. Ignorant of arithmetic, he managed, with this form of book-keeping, to keep his accounts exact. It is from this book that it is possible to reconstruct his itinerary.

For no apparent reason he would become suddenly talkative and everyone would strain to hear. His affliction of the larynx made speaking difficult and sometimes his voice became nothing but a loud and strained whisper. What did he talk about to the passengers in general? He cursed the climate of all countries but Italy. The climates of France and Germany were not only unfit for human beings, but had also a bad influence on musical genius.

He cited the nonchalant Lazzarone, seated on the border of a blue sea beneath the gentle sky, inspired by the soft winds to poetry and music. How can one's fingers play with a lute when they are busy holding together the ends of a fur coat? Italy—"there one is born to sing; in France one is born to twitter; in Germany, to thunder; in England, to pay. In

Italy music is everywhere, on the ground, in the sea, in the trees, in the homes of the canaille and in the homes of the rich. You have no bread and you sing. You are unhappy, but you sing nevertheless . . . melody comes from fire. The ground, the air, and the sky of Italy form a setting of flames."

Then, as if by suggestion, he would wrap himself more closely in his fur coat.

"This is an excellent article, especially in this God-forsaken Germany, where one cannot go without it even in the heart of summer."

Fortunately most of the passengers did not understand him, for he spoke in Italian.

Paganini was as careless of the comforts of life as he was of his personal appearance. He found all hotels outside of his native land equally unsatisfactory. He accepted any room assigned to him, whether it was the royal suite or a garret. He did not know whether the mattress was eiderdown or straw. He did, however, demand absolute quiet. He needed many hours of sleep, and slept well except when annoyed by his cough.

"I have enough noise in large towns," he would say, "I wish to rest on the road."

The first thing he did upon arriving in his room was to throw open the window and take what he called an "air bath."

He was never heard practicing. "I have labored enough to acquire my talent; it is time that I rest."

An English amateur of the violin followed him from one hotel to another for six months in the hope of obtaining his secret via a keyhole. He would engage the room next to the

artist's and would spend hours with his ear glued to the door. It was all in vain, for the most profound silence reigned in Paganini's apartment. On one occasion the Englishman saw Paganini take his violin from its case and raise it to his shoulder. He rapidly fingered the neck as if calculating certain positions and then replaced it in its case. This so discouraged the young man that he booked passage on the next boat for home.

A painter who occupied an adjoining room to the violinist for several months maintained that he was awakened in the middle of the night by Paganini "endeavoring to produce the most bizarre sounds. During the day complete silence."

Lulli was in the habit of boasting that his superior skill obviated the necessity of practice, but when a bow covered with soap was discovered among his clothes, his secret was betrayed. There is no reason to believe that Paganini would stoop to such a silly artifice. It is more likely that he indulged in "mental practice," and that he exercised the fingers of his left hand and the wrist of his right without putting the bow to the strings.

Notwithstanding the number of concerts he gave, he never accustomed himself to them. On the day of a performance he was always nervous and preoccupied. Sometimes he would lie all morning on a sofa in his room. Before going to rehearsal, he would open his violin case, examine the state of his instrument, tune it and put it back. He would count and recount the orchestral parts, taking large quantities of snuff, an indication with him of mental disquietude.

A Paganini rehearsal was like nothing else in the world. When he entered the hall, the musicians stopped talking and



turned to him in expectation of something extraordinary. If someone, a relative of the manager or a music student who knew the door man, had slipped in to listen, Paganini discovered him at once and dismissed him. A rehearsal was a private matter, so private, indeed, that he did not even trust the musicians with his part of the concerto. When the men of the orchestra finished the introduction and rested their violins on their knees, waiting expectantly for a musical treat, he would play a few bars of his cadenza, then wave his bow and say, "Et cetera, Signori." He never had his part of an original composition copied, for fear it would be seen. He played entirely from memory.

If the orchestra played well, he would reward them with a smile and "*Bravissimo, siete tutti virtuosi.*" (You are all virtuosi). But if an instrument came in a second too late or was too loud, he would stop with a terrible controlled exasperation, say nothing, and begin over again. Should the error be repeated, he would pace to and fro and sometimes burst forth in a tempest of rage. The men of the orchestra never leaned back in their chairs when they played with Paganini.

While they admired this incredible genius, many of them questioned its origin. An old player in the orchestra in Cologne, during a conversation with the soloist, took a pinch of snuff. Paganini, wishing to be amiable, took out his own *tabatière* and filled that of the old man with genuine Parisian snuff. The old man thanked him, but during the intermission sneaked away to empty the contents. One of his colleagues observed this action and asked him the reason for it.



A REHEARSAL IN STUTTGART, 1829

Before concert halls were heated.

(From the lithograph by Carl Heinrich Weing.)



"You never know," he said, shaking his head, "what peculiarities this snuff might have."

After the rehearsal Paganini would converse for a few moments with the conductor, thanking him for his coöperation and calling his attention to special passages. He would gather up all the orchestral parts and take them back to his hotel, where he would indulge in a light lunch. "Little eating and little drinking never hurt anyone," was a motto which he adopted through force of circumstances.

Then he would throw himself on his bed and remain immobile for hours, sleeping or thinking, no one ever knew which.

He dressed hastily and at the last moment. It was the pitcher-and-basin era, and mirrors cast back distorted images. He hid his scrawny neck in the winding folds of a starched white cravat, held in place by a jewel. What transformation took place in the carriage we do not know, but when he stepped into the theater, his gravity had disappeared and he became gay and self-possessed.

His first question was, "Is there a large audience?" If he were answered in the affirmative, he would say, "Good—good—excellent people." If, on the contrary, the attendance were small, he would shake his head and regret that the effect of the music would be lost in the empty boxes. On one occasion he expressed his annoyance at the sparse attendance by smashing a mirror in the lobby.

After the introductory symphony, he would delay several moments in order to make a more dramatic entrance. He would step quickly across the stage with his odd gait, and bow automatically. The audience never saw him tune his

violin. He could turn a peg imperceptibly and with absolute accuracy. He would change the tuning of his violin during a concert and completely mystify the musicians in the audience.

The programs, in those days, were long and taxing. A concert affected Paganini as a fit does an epileptic. He would leave the stage, pale and trembling, his skin covered with a cold sweat, and his eyes staring at space. His pulse would be faint and rapid. In a few moments, however, he would pull himself together as a medium comes out of a trance, and would enter his carriage, smiling and bowing to the crowds which had lined up to get a glimpse of him. At his hotel, too, a crowd would have collected. Pleased at this, Paganini would join the company at the *table d'hôte* in the best of spirits. He would eat heartily, if his health permitted, and discuss the concert.

"I played better at the end than at the beginning," he would say, though no one would dare to agree with him.

## XXXI

### AT PARTIES

WHEREVER Paganini played it became the fashion to take up the violin. Young ladies of aristocratic families left their embroidery frames and their paint palettes to scratch violin strings, and there was an embarrassment of invitations. Sometimes he refused an invitation rather than change his cravat. He realized, too, the difficulty of eating sparingly when a banquet had been prepared in his honor. Occasionally he would dispense with all caution and eat and drink heartily, with the reassuring consciousness of a bottle of *Elixir Le Roy* at home. He would feel no immediate ill effects, but a few days after, he would pay the intestinal penalty. He was always infinitely gayer before dinner than after. He enjoyed conversation immensely when he met Italians. He was polite with the ease of manner of a man who, having consorted with royalty, need have no fear of offending mere nobility, or wealth.

Nevertheless, the evenings were sometimes difficult. When people converse in a foreign language, they must find refuge in the banalities common to all races. There is no possibility of the expression of nuances of thought. It was no wonder that German hostesses frequently resorted to music to carry off the evening. This, however, was a great mistake, for



Paganini's ears were so full of his own music that he heard no other. The string trios, the clavichord sonatas that were so carefully performed for the great master sent their vibrations shuddering against an impenetrable shell. Paganini would sit with his back to the light—for his eyes had been affected by the glare of the footlights—and count the figures on the wall paper or outline the pattern of the carpet with his toe. He would concentrate on the desperate hope that the growling of his stomach would not be heard during the *pianissimo* passages. If a discussion of music arose, he became sullen; when questioned about other musicians, he answered in monosyllables. A painter can discuss a movement in art; writers occasionally know something of the history of literature, but an instrument is often a musician's only organ of articulation. Paganini had enough serious music in life. He went to parties to be amused.

The instances of his wit are rare and tend to show that he was a man of a single idea. At a dinner party Paganini encountered Ugo Foscolo. Seizing the violinist's hand, the poet cried:

"When I heard you at the concert yesterday, Homer stood before me in all his sublimity. The grandeur of the first movement, the exquisite loveliness of your *Adagio* was to me the tender love-talk of Achilles and Briseis. When will you let me hear the despair and wailings of the hero over the body of Patroclus?"

Paganini replied, "When Achille Paganini finds his Patroclus among violinists."

In view of the fact that Paganini never read a book, his understanding of the mythological reference is astonishing.

There is another story of Paganini's wit. A duchess asked him to come to dinner with his violin.

He replied, "Madam, my violin never dines."

This story is told of De Beriot, Sarasate, Wilhelmj, Wieniawski, and, I believe, Kreisler.

## XXXII

### LOVE AND GEOGRAPHY

THE history of his success becomes monotonous. In Frankfort he played at the Museum Theater under Guhr. It was thus that the professor was enabled to make the study of Paganini which still remains the key to his secret. In this city he was made honorary member of the *Museumsgesellschaft*, and six months later was given the title of "Baron."

At Leipzig he visited the pleasant house of Abraham Mendelssohn and played at the *Gewandhaus*, where young Schumann heard him and the ten year old Clara Wieck, and at Hamburg he numbered among his hearers Heine and the painter, Lyser.

In Warsaw, where Paganini had been summoned to play for the Coronation of Tzar Nicholas as King of Poland, a young pianist, Frederic Chopin, sat quietly in the audience. He gave two concerts at Spohr's theater in Cassel. Spohr took Paganini to Wilhelmshöhe to dinner.

Paganini asked, "What do you think of my concert?"

The answer was evasive, but in his *Selbstbiographie* Spohr records:—

"His left hand, and also his invariably accurate intonation, appeared to me worthy of the highest admiration. But in his compositions and in his delivery I found a singular mixture

of the highest genius and a childish lack of taste, which now attracted and now repelled me, so that after hearing him often, I still felt unsatisfied."

At Stuttgart the King of Würtemberg presented him with one hundred Louis d'or. It is said that before leaving Germany, Paganini sent over six thousand pounds to the bank of England for safe keeping.

On more than one occasion formal deputations were sent from a town to request the privilege of hearing the great artist. A concert at Carlsruhe on December 10th was hastily sandwiched between Stuttgart and Frankfort. Its only record is in a letter dated December 12th.

"I have given a concert the evening before last which was guaranteed by His Highness the Grand Duke for a hundred and fifty Louis d'or. The effect of my playing is so magical that the most important personages and the sweetest ladies go mad. I must not tell you what has been related to me on the account of a queen by one of her intimate councilors. And you will be surprised in seeing the letters of a very beautiful dame, twenty years young, who has recently been married to a baron and who would leave her family to unite herself to me for life. However, as she is the daughter of an illustrious man in Germany and intimate councilor of his Majesty, I must sacrifice the pleasure of possessing her to religion and to my glory. One day you will read her letters which will make you cry. . . ."

From December until April Paganini remained in Frankfort, detained by the illness of Achille. He amused himself composing on themes by Spohr, and by his interest in the "sweetest girl." In this case Paganini's love lasted until he

discovered that she had no taste for music. This bitter disappointment drove him from her into the arms of the Baroness Hélène, whom he loved because she knew geography. What a bottomless pit of dates, places, initials, hopes and disappointments was Germi. In the fall of 1831, while going through one of his periodic recuperations at Baden, Paganini had time to tell Germi all about it.

“. . . On my appearing in the cities where I have never been, everybody recognizes me and they crowd around me as though I were the *Befana*,”—an old woman who comes on Epiphany to bring toys to children. “It would be impossible for me to travel incognito unless I put on a mask. Of my love affairs, I’ll speak another time.”

The sacrifice on the altar of religion and glory lasted only as long as reason remained subservient to desire. On August 30th Paganini forgot what he had written on December 12th, and if Germi was as keen a student of people as he was of finance, he knew a great deal more than Paganini wished him to:—

“The words contained in your letter of the 11th helped me to recover after a severe cold which obliged me to suspend the treatment of the waters and baths. Rebisso! The man Rebisso is in my heart and Achille always speaks of him. Rebisso lost the most beautiful moment of his life after he left me. The beauties of Germany were ravishing and would also have caused him delight. His name is always heard in Berlin, Warsaw, and everywhere, and many young girls ask me after him. And that’s why I ask you to tell me where he is now. I approve what you have done for me. Eskely must have remitted you 51,305 lire. Paris, London and Rus-

sia will help me to reach the million which I hope you will employ as you like, either for mortgages or by buying *sciec*. A place of delight will be very dear to me to write musical duets and quartets, with ravioli to boot, anessi, etc., etc. But there will also have to be Mme. Camilla, and Tonietta. If Madame Camilla wishes to give me the pleasure of seeing her again, and enjoying her ravioli, which are exquisite, I shall come by Post whenever she likes. She has only to let me know. In the meanwhile, please kiss her in the middle of the palm of the hand, and give a caress for me to the French Tonietta. M . . . has done very well to marry. If he forgets the past, he will make his wife happy and he will be envied. I also sometimes think of marrying.

“At Frankfort-am-Main I asked in marriage the sweetest girl. She is the daughter of a merchant, not rich, but comfortable. But thinking that she is too young and too beautiful, and that not loving or not feeling music in her soul, she would dedicate herself to me only under false pretenses, I begin to give up the idea. It would be more convenient that I should marry another one. This is the daughter of a famous . . . the most famous . . . author of Jurisprudence in Germany, Monsieur De F . . . cavalier of many orders, intimate councilor of the King of Bavaria and president of the city of A. . . . This daughter of his, called Hélène, a baroness, having been married to a Baron for three years, but not for love, is fond of music and sings very well. She came from Nüremberg to hear me and asked her husband to bring her again for a second concert. After having heard me, seen and spoken to me, she fell so violently in love with me that she has no peace and she will succumb in the end if she



can not have me. It is nine months that I have the pleasure of knowing her. Her figure is very nice and she has a fine education. Her letters, which are over twenty-four, are worth being printed and are animated by a feeling by far greater than that of Eloisa for Abelardo. I have them all at Frankfurt, and if you wish, I shall send you copies of them. By possessing this young woman I would have a good wife and Achille an excellent mother. You will meanwhile read the enclosed letter which enabled me to go from here to A . . . where, in order not to be known, I arrived in the middle of the night and did not show myself to the Posta but I descended in the middle of the street under the invented title of architect to His Majesty, the King of Prussia.

"I miraculously stayed unobserved in a hotel for three days where I was visited by the aforesaid Baroness. I also left during the night and returned to Baden. The sentiments of this lady have so deeply touched me that I was obliged to respect and to love her. She has induced her father to obtain a divorce in the hope of becoming my wife and has declared that she will renounce all my wealth—she only wants to become my wife. What do you think of all this? It is very difficult to find a woman who can love as much as *Hélène*. It is true that when they hear my musical language, the vibrations of my notes makes them all cry. But I am no longer young, nor am I handsome anymore. On the contrary, I have become very ugly. You think of it and tell me what is your opinion. She reasons as she writes. Her voice is insinuating. She knows geography as well as I know the violin.

"Before I forget, give my love to my mother and keep on, etc., etc.

"With regard to my brother, also give him my love, etc., etc., as above and as you think fit."

The *et ceteras* in both cases are evidently tactful reminders to provide money for his mother and brother.

A total disregard of physical comfort, such as was entailed by traveling incognito and arriving in the middle of the night, is a charming trait in a man of forty-eight. Paganini is the same ardent lover who had seduced Angelina Cavanna fifteen years before. He has simply learned to demand more of his women.

"Her figure is very nice and she has a fine education."

What did they talk about—the veiled German Baroness with the knowledge of geography and the Italian violinist? Paganini's powers were failing. When he says to Germi, "I am no longer young," we know what tragedy he is reflecting on. Were there times when he responded to the ardor of Hélène by taking out his violin? Nothing came of Paganini's affair with Baroness Hélène, daughter of Monsieur de F., President of the city of A.

It is generally agreed that Paganini never opened a book. He makes frequent literary references, though the one to Eloise and Abelard shows clearly that he had not read their story. What, then, was his real cultural state? It must be remembered that he mixed constantly with people of education. He traveled in no wilderness, but from one center of learning and culture to another. He went to the theater and came in close personal contact with the leading literary and musical creators of the time. Everything points to the fact that Paganini had a remarkable natural intelligence. He probably absorbed the beauty and history of Italy, the

music and philosophy of Germany, and later the extraordinary civilization of Paris. Paganini had the ability to take his education *en route*.

In the previous July and August he had gone to the cure at Ems, where, according to the *Revue Musicale*, he excited "so much curiosity that a traveling artist who gave a concert and announced that Paganini would assist, had excellent box office results."

Paganini had conquered Germany. In spite of his detractors he was the most significant figure in the violinistic world. Schools had existed before him and developed after him. He could be said to derive from none of them and to have started none. One Vienna critic expressed in a sentence Paganini's musical independence. "The only thing that Paganini has in common with other violinists is the violin and the bow."

Ludwig Emil Grimm, the artist, Karl von Holtei, A. B. Marx, and countless others expressed their praises in print. Meyerbeer said, "Where our thoughts end, there Paganini begins."

Schumann said, "Paganini is the turning point of virtuosity."

Chopin said, "Paganini is perfection."

Goethe was a dissenter:—"There is lacking in order that it may be called enjoyment, which to me is a sort of swaying between sensibility and understanding, a basis for this pillar of fire and clouds. I heard something meteor-like but could give myself no further explanation. He appeared to me the first time like Moses, who wished to exhibit his arts to the Egyptians; my skin actually wanted to itch. What it

is in this virtuoso that so attracts the attention may be a mixture of moodishness and the longing for freedom. It is a mannerism without a manner; a peculiar uniqueness without distinction (*ein besonderes Einzelnes aber kein einziges*), because it leads like a thread that always gets thinner, into nothingness. It tastes like music, as an artificial oyster, peppered and salted, is swallowed."

Nevertheless, Paganini had conquered Germany, with the *Campanella*, *The Witches* and *The Prayer of Moses*.

Strassburg welcomed him with French enthusiasm. During his first concert in that city, an attack of spasms interrupted his program. This served to enhance his fascination. On the days when he had played a little less surely than others, he would say, "If I were in Paris, I would not play today." Strassburg was the bridge to Paris.

Paris, the critical, the decadent, the insular, Paris of tradition and reform, Paris under a bourgeois king, of democratic creeds and fastidious ideas, a palpitant Paris, sensing a change in manners and morals and breathlessly asking to have its classical chastity outraged. Rode, Viotti, Spohr, Kreutzer, and Lafont had built up a structure for Paganini, the romantic, to demolish with his little-finger pizzicato.

### XXXIII

#### THE ROMANTIC MOVEMENT IN PARIS

ONE indication of a man's character lies in how he occupies his first night in Paris. The provincial, having heard all his life of Montmartre, comes to the Boulevard Clichy and is flattered by the attentions of street walkers; the American, having been told that Paris is the city of vice, pays a hundred francs to peep at a show staged for Americans; the young student throws his books away, yet is drawn irresistably to the Quartier of the Sorbonne.

Paganini arrived in Paris from Strassburg in February, 1831, and established himself at the Hotel des Princes on the rue Richelieu. On his first evening he went to the *Opéra des Italiens* to see Malibran in *Otello*, and on his second he made the acquaintance of the lady at a soirée at Troupenas'.

His old friend, Rossini, was there, fatter than ever on the success of *William Tell*; Tamborini, Lablache, Rubini, De Beriot all contributed to make the evening of the music publisher an item for the society column. Malibran was not so absorbed in De Beriot as to be unaware of the fascinating Italian. Her aria was sung to him and she challenged him to compete with her.

"Madame, how dare I, with all the advantages you possess in beauty and your incomparable voice, take up your glove?"



He permitted himself, however, to be persuaded and a servant was sent to his rooms next door for his violin. After an introduction in which he played with the motive of Malibran's aria, he introduced the whole melody with modulations that amazed the company. Malibran herself proclaimed him the victor of the contest and paid him many compliments; nevertheless, it was the penniless De Beriot whom she married.

On March 2nd Paganini was to be presented at the court of Louis Phillipe in the Palais Royale.

"Signor Paganini," says the *Courier des Theatres*, "was invited by Monsieur Paër to play before the King yesterday. A sudden indisposition deprived the virtuoso of this honor," the sudden indisposition being a violent attack of coughing.

During the weeks that Paganini was negotiating for a hall he enjoyed the charm of Paris. He could frequently be seen in his blue redingote walking in the Tuilleries, leading Achille by the hand and stopping to look at the statues. If the quaintness of the little old streets did not impress a Genoese, the majesty of the parks and boulevards did. They would stop for lunch at the Café Anglais or for chocolate in the Bois. There was so much to see and Achille wanted to see everything. They visited the Institution for the Blind, and Paganini was struck with the purity of their ensemble singing. He found the house of Cagliostro fascinating and the papers found that he had performed black rites to raise the buried treasure of the Count St. Germaine. He spent several evenings at the *Opéra des Italiens* and heard the



Beethoven *Fifth* at the Conservatoire. Occasionally he patronized the baths in the Palais Royale.

As usual Paris was the scene of political and artistic excitement. It has often been said that it was just the moment for a meteoric personality like Paganini to inflame the popular imagination. Any moment in Paris is the right one to inflame the popular imagination.

The Salon of 1831 exhibited the first works of Dupré and the best of Meissonier. While the frivolities of Fragonard and Boucher still lingered in gilt salons, Ingres' pen was drawing the receding lines of the past, and Delacroix's "drunken brush" indicating the direction of the future. Art journals were filled with names such as Corot, Millet, Delaroche, Rude and the late David.

When Paganini arrived, Chateaubriand was old and Balzac young. Sainte-Beuve was still a poet and the art of criticism had acquired new dignity in the hands of such men as Castil-Blaze and Jules Janin. George Sand was painting snuff boxes and fans to augment her alimony, and struggling mildly for her virtue. Her first novel was in the press of the two-year-old *Revue de Paris* and the *Revue des Deux Mondes* had just been born. Scribe, Lamartine, and de Musset were being lyrical, and Hugo and de Vigny had erected a new romantic drama on the classic ruins of the old. Taglioni danced with deliberate poise, and Malibran and Sonntag dueled in song.

Tolerance in France had progressed a long way since 1764 when Leclaire was assassinated for trying to introduce a new musical idea. Though the curlicues of Rossini, Spontini and Pacini still delighted feminine opera subscribers, young musi-



MALIBRAN  
Who sang for Paganini and married De Beriot.



cians were able to seek satisfaction in the purer line of Gluck and the public was taking small doses of the Beethoven symphonies, distilled through Fétis, Kreutzer and Habeneck. Auber's *La Muette de Portici*, Rossini's *William Tell*, and Meyerbeer's *Robert Le Diable* represented a crescendo of dishonest opera, but Mozart symphonies were no longer regarded as containing too much *music*. Donizetti and Bellini were lined up behind the standard of Rossini, while Hérold and Halévy marched against them, waving the banner of French romanticism. In spite of opera, symphony was beginning to command attention. The *Fantastique* of Berlioz and the *Revolutionnaire* of Liszt had their followers. Berlioz, the vociferous enemy of the Italian school, was an admirer of Paganini. He had just captured the *Prix de Rome* and was in Genoa when the violinist made his début in Paris.

"I could find no trace of bust or statue or tradition of Columbus. I also tried in vain to hear something of Paganini, who at that moment was electrifying Paris while I—with my usual luck—was kicking my heels in his native town."

Between 1810 and 1830 Scott, Dante and Goethe had been translated into French. Madame de Staël had united the streams of German and French romanticism and the French were catching up with the late Rousseau. The essays of Schlegel, Herder and Schiller injected the German conception of romanticism into France and the last had been made an honorary citizen of the Republic for his creation of a robber-hero with a beautiful soul. Byron had "borne the pageant of his bleeding heart through Europe."

Even opera composers were beginning to realize, after three centuries, that the play was the thing, and arias were

subordinated to ideas. Music began to take up dramatic expression and Paganini, with his palpitations, his voices of lovers, his tempests and barnyard fowl, brought drama to the concert platform.

"His *Clochette*," says Victor Herbert, "rang the knell of classic interpretation."

Paganini rumors had, of course, preceded him. It was whispered on the boulevards that he had arrived incognito some time before and, having heard the French violinists, had not had the courage to present himself.

There was some difficulty about the negotiations for a hall and it was only at the last minute that the Opéra was engaged. The conditions were "Two concerts a week on Wednesdays and Sundays; Paganini to receive two-thirds of the receipts of the Wednesday concerts, and, aside from a sum of three thousand Francs, the whole of the Sunday receipts." The prices were tripled.

On Wednesday evening, March 9th the great Paganini was to be heard for the first time at the Royal Academy of Music under the direction of Habeneck.

"A ballet will conclude the performance and it will be a gala night in every way."

## XXXIV

### ATTACK

PARIS, the alembic of all talents, the last court of appeal, the beginning and the end of art, waited, daring the great Paganini to sweep it off its dancing feet.

Nicolo Paganini knew what was expected of him. He dressed a little more carelessly, ate nothing, as usual, and refrained from asking his customary question, "Is it a good house?"

It was a good house, and at concert pitch. The women in their brilliant billowing dresses "*aux Délices du Siècle*" . . . "*à la Paysanne de Cour*," with their coiffures arranged after Folly, Revolution, Sleep, or the Bastille, were little more dazzling than the dandies in their flowered waistcoats. Young De Vigny and Marie Dorval sat holding hands in their "perpetual seraphic hallucination." They did not know that the man with negroid features who stared insolently at Madam Dorval's shoulder would later become her lover. The Countess D'Agoult led young Liszt down the aisle and the fascinating Kalkbrenner winked at his favorite pupil, who later became Madam Pleyel. De Musset and George Sand brushed shoulders unaware of each other. Kreutzer, Vieuxtemps, Meyerbeer, Cherubini, Halévy, Abraham Mendelssohn . . . a sight for opera glasses! Hugo, Gautier,



Sainte-Beuve. What overtones must have reached the violinist as he stepped on to the stage alone!

De Beriot was there with Ernest Legouvé. He held a score in his hand.

"This man is a charlatan," he said; "he cannot execute what is printed here because it is not executable."

A grotesque appearance does not surprise Parisians. Moreover, nothing could be so fantastic as the caricatures in the shop windows. But from the first note of the *E Minor Concerto* they knew that this man was, after his fashion, the first violinist of the world. The ear quickly becomes accustomed to perfection. Toward the end of the second movement the surety of the artist had transmitted itself to his audience. They knew that everything was all right and then—plung! a string had snapped. De Beriot stopped breathing, Liszt wanted to cry, the gallery waited for something to happen. Paganini continued the concerto on the three remaining strings. Paris was enchanted.



At a subsequent concert he played a concerto composed especially for the Parisians, which has unfortunately been lost. Castil-Blaze in his report of it in the *Journal des Débats* explains the French conception of French music:—

"Paganini is doubtless very learned; his compositions, his discoveries prove it. He has paid homage to our musical world by writing a concerto especially for France, and which is not to be produced anywhere except in Paris. It seems another evidence of his wonderful intuition which led him to feel that our taste runs decidedly to noble music, elegant,

passionate and graceful, to compositions treated with all the vigor of coloring that harmony can give, and all the charm of dreamy, playful, and heroic moods in turn, and the wildest daring of which melody is capable. This concerto, in D minor, has a most original form and includes some very picturesque effects. The first violin, in the highest register, replies to the trombones, which roar in hollow tones; it takes up the strain where the trumpets have just left it and renders it in harmonics, in such a way that it seems as though the same instrument were still playing; the sound is identical. The skill, the magic of Paganini's playing astonishes me more every day."

On the same evening he played the *Campanella* and *The Prayer of Moses*. Nouritt, Lavasseur, Dabarée and Mademoiselle Dorus appeared with him.

At his early concerts Paganini played the concerti of Rode, Viotti, and Kreutzer, but his execution did not bear comparison except among the indiscriminating, and he soon had the wisdom to retreat to the shelter of his own compositions, and Paris the taste to permit it. Fétis wrote a great deal of criticism, good and bad, which he sifted and weighed in the writing of his biography. In *La Revue Musicale*, immediately after the concert, he said:

"Baillot puts more passion, more delicate sentiment into an adagio by Mozart or Beethoven than Paganini has in his entire system."

The receipts of the first concert were 19,080 francs. His eleven concerts in Paris totaled 165,052 francs.

The third concert scheduled for the 16th was postponed because of a court function and when it took place on the 20th,

the receipts were 21,895 francs, the highest figure of the Paris concerts, Paganini wrote Monsieur Veron, the director of the opera house, regarding his concert of the 27th:—

“I want this concert to be more ornamental than useful,” which meant that he had asked the Duchess of Orléans to assist.

“I would ask, in your interest as well as for my satisfaction, that you advertise her appearance in large letters on your announcements for the week, and I would also like you to put on some pretty ballet.”

On the 10th, one of the dates scheduled for a Paganini concert, the officers of the National Guard organized a ball at the Opera for the benefit of the poor. They requested Paganini to attend and “play a few pieces.” Paganini refused and engaged the *Italiens* for his concert. This action brought about accusations of penuriousness and Janin’s bitter public attack, to which Paganini replied that by relinquishing the larger house he lost from fifteen to twenty thousand francs, and that moreover he intended to give a charity concert before leaving Paris, which he did on Sunday, April 17th. *Le Moniteur* tells that in addition to this concert Paganini personally donated three thousand francs to a charity organization and a number of needy families.

This refusal was the beginning of the feud between Paganini and the press. His bitterest assailant, Janin, was unremitting for years and each refusal of Paganini to perform for charity was the subject of a new editorial in the *Journal des Débats*. The most famous is “*M. Paganini et les Inondées de Saint-Etienne*.” Paganini refused to play for the benefit of the victims of a flood because he said he was re-

turning to Italy. Columns were devoted to the heartlessness of this Italian.

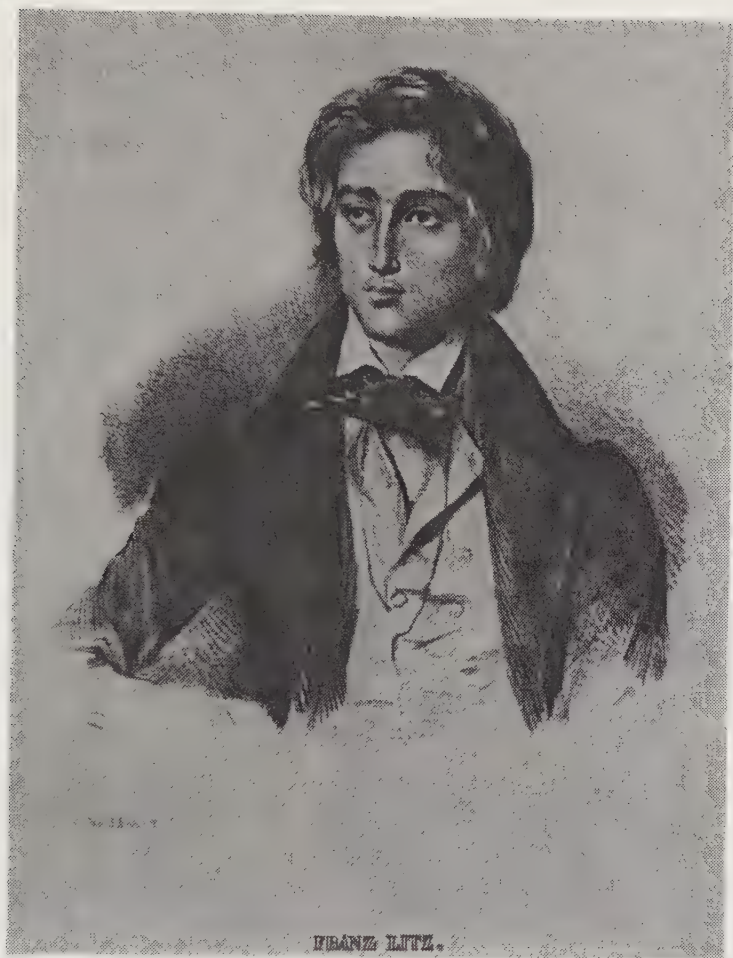
"As if there were not in Paris French artists whose names are dear to all the arts! As if there were not in Paris Taglioni, that Italian of Paris; Fanny Elssler, that German of Paris; Baillot, that virtuoso of Europe! Everyone, in short, great and small, is able to come to the help of our unfortunate compatriots of Saint-Etienne."

Janin, with all his wit, did not perceive that it is easier to comply than to refuse, and that Paganini's refusal was prompted by a desperate attempt at conservation. It was as if he felt that there were just so many concerts in him and when he had played them, he would be literally played out.

Years later, when it mattered less, Janin apologized as publicly as he had condemned:

"Nothing was more cruel, more unjust, and more hard, I admit, to my shame, than my anger against Paganini. I was wrong in form and I was wrong in substance, but the opinion of the public was with me. 'One should not take public opinion too seriously,' said the archbishop of Cambrai. Always have I played the noble rôle and everyone discredits an avaricious artist. Today I acknowledge him right; he was his own master after all. He wanted to be generous in his own time. He had nothing to do with one hundred or so coal miners who had never heard of Paganini; finally he had his will. He had his caprices. He regarded it as a shame to give for nothing these results, almost divine, of an art which had cost him so much genius and so many nights, and a talent that he felt, without telling anyone, was being ex-

tinguished little by little with his life. In vain he tried to answer me and only succeeded in redoubling my anger and the plaudits of the gallery. Thus he retreated into silence; he awaited the day of his revenge, and when that had finally come to prove how a great artist avenges himself—in the manner of a king of the house of Valois.”



"LE PETIT LITZ"

The French spelled to suit their own mispronunciation.  
Hearing Paganini diverted him from a monastic career.





## XXXV

### LE PETIT LITZ

**F**RANZ LISZT, "le petit Litz,"—the Parisians reversed the consonants to suit their tongues—was living with three pianos and his mother in the rue Montholon. Having been disappointed in love, he had transmuted his interest to a fanatical espousal of religion and the social creed of Saint-Simon. The Revolution of 1830 had shaken him somewhat from his lethargy, but if it had not been for Paganini, his notes might have been muted against the walls of a monastery. When we think of Liszt's influence on modern music, we realize something of the importance of Paganini's Paris appearance. At the début Liszt was so moved by the capricious violinist that he reverted to his music. He disappeared from public view and sat at the piano practicing for six hours at a time.

The influence which Paganini exercised over Liszt is proved by the compositions of the latter which date from this time. Just as Paganini accomplished the heretofore impossible on four strings of a violin, so Liszt, under his influence, created what he himself called the orchestration of the pianoforte. He made Transcriptions of the *Caprices* and in so doing invented an entirely new piano technique. He transferred them to the piano as bravura studies, the first one imitating the violin. He later made a second and simpler edition. He ar-

ranged the theme of the *Campanella* into a Fantasia for the concert hall. This was the beginning of piano virtuosity, though Liszt carried Paganini music as far beyond Paganini as Wagner carried Liszt music beyond Liszt.

The career of another young musician in the audience was deflected by the Italian fiddler. This was the Norwegian, Ole Bull, who made a study of Paganini's technique and succeeded so well that he himself became one of the world's outstanding virtuosi. His exposition of Paganini tends to refute, if refutation is necessary, the statement that Paganini was not a musician's musician.

"Without a knowledge of the Italian art of singing, it is impossible to properly appreciate his playing. Contemporary with Pasta, Pizzaroni, Rubini, Malibran, Paganini rivaled them, singing on his violin melodies many of which had been sung by those artists, and astonishing them even more than the public. In fact his style was so original, his music so filled with ever new episodes of startling beauty or original quaintness, that the violinists of the day stood confounded."

He tells of Paganini's last Parisian concert:

"He played three pieces, Habeneck wielding the bâton. He was a leader of great ability, and the players, the majority of them graduates of the Conservatoire, were entirely under his command. Paganini played, as far as I can remember, his *Concerto in B Minor*, with the *Rondo Campanella*, also two variations of Haydn's famous *Austrian National Hymn* and concluded with his *Moto Perpetuo*. The public were accustomed to applaud (I have the whole scene before me as if it were today) when he appeared at the side. When his shadow was seen approaching, the audience ap-



### LISZT AT THE PIANO

Liszt was strongly influenced by Paganini and adapted his violin effects to the piano.  
*Left to right:* Dumas, Victor Hugo, George Sand, Paganini, Rossini, Liszt, the Countess D'Agoult.

*(From a Painting by Danhauser.)*



plauded as usual, but to their astonishment Paganini did not appear, but instead a man in black, with a music-stand, which he placed on the stage near the conductor. Again a shadow was seen on the wall, and again the applause sounded. A man appeared clad in livery; he bore two candles, which he placed on the stand and lighted. He disappeared, amid the laughter of the audience. Then came the first fellow in black, this time with a manuscript in his hand. The house behaved as before, evidently confusing the black fellow with Paganini. Finally came another shadow, and this time it was Paganini himself, but the applause was now withheld, and he was not recognized until he came forward to the footlights. There he made a forced salutation, accompanied by a contraction of the facial muscles, apparently puzzled at his silent reception. He had been in another room, and knew nothing of the ludicrous scene which had preceded his appearance. Immediately Habeneck raised his bâton, as if to give his order to the orchestra, but Paganini shook his head. He took his bow in his left hand together with his violin, and thrust his right into the recesses of the pockets of his swallow-tail coat, and brought out a pair of dark green gloves, which he transferred to his left hand. He shook his head again, and, after a deeper plunge, produced a large white handkerchief, which he also placed in his left hand, accompanying the action with an audible expression of dissatisfaction. A still deeper thrust revealed a brown box, which he regarded with a nod and a smile, and added to the other things in his left hand. He now went through the same deliberate motions in passing the handkerchief and gloves back to his pocket. He then opened the box and took out a pair of spectacles, medi-



tated a moment, apparently considering the next move, and finally, taking the bow in his right hand, and bending a little, put the spectacles on and looked about in a complacent manner. But how changed he was! The glasses were dark blue, giving a ghastly appearance to his emaciated face; they looked like two large holes in his countenance. Raising his foot and bringing it down promptly, he gave the signal to begin. It had been announced as his last concert in Paris for the season, and a true foreboding seemed to thrill his listeners that they would not again see that lank, angular figure, with its haggard face, or hear again the wondrous witchery of his violin."



DRAWING BY AUBREY BEARDSLEY  
(*Courtesy of Dodd, Meade & Co.*)



STATUETTE BY DANTON  
(*Louvre*)



## XXXVI

### A LETTER TO THE PAPERS

LIKE Vienna, Paris adopted the Paganini mode. At the Nouveautés a sketch was presented called *An Up-to-date Occurrence in One Act with Songs and Music, Paganini in Germany*. This was more than a momentary phase because three years later we find at the Variétés a sketch called *Rossini's Room*, in which the character of Paganini is played by Lherie. Shop windows were filled with caricatures and while the story of his partnership with Satan was not accepted unqualifiedly, he was regarded somewhat in the light of a murderer. The time had come when Paganini wanted justice. Fétis came to his rescue by requesting the facts and publishing the letter transposed into proper French in *La Revue Musicale*. Germinelli probably also had a hand in its composition:—

“*Paris, April 21st, 1831.*”

“*Sir,*

“So many marks of kindness have been lavished on me by the Parisian public,—so many plaudits have been awarded to me,—that I am bound to give credit to that celebrity which is said to have preceded my arrival. But, if any doubt on the subject could have remained, it must have been dissipated by the care I see taken by your artists to make representations of my likeness,—by the numerous portraits

of Paganini, more or less like the original, with which the walls of your capital are covered. It is not, however, to simple portraits, Sir, that their speculations are confined. While walking yesterday along the Boulevard des Italiens, I saw, in a print-shop, a lithograph representing "Paganini in Prison."

"'Well,' said I to myself, 'here have we some worthy citizen who, in imitation of Don Bazilio, has been turning to account the calumny which has pursued me for the last fifteen years.'

"While smilingly examining all the details of this mystification with which the fancy of the artist had furnished him, I perceived that a numerous circle had gathered around me, and that everyone, as he compared my features with those of the young man represented in the lithograph, was taking pains to satisfy himself as to the degree in which I was altered since the period of my imprisonment! Thus I found that the thing was taken seriously, and that the speculation, at least, was no bad one. It occurred to me that, as every one must live, I might as well myself furnish a few anecdotes to those enterprising persons who take so much interest in me and my affairs, so that, if so disposed they may have a few more subjects for prints, as good, and quite as true, as that in question. It is with this view that I beg you, Sir, to do me the favor of inserting this letter in your Musical Review.

"They have represented me in prison; but they are ignorant of the cause of my incarceration; however, they know as much of that as I do myself, and those who concocted the anecdote. There are many stories in reference to this, which



### PAGANINI IN PRISON

According to rumors which Paganini never succeeded in putting down, he learned to play while serving a long prison sentence for murder.

*(Lithograph by Louis Boulanger.)*





would supply them with as many subjects for their pencils; for example, it is stated that, having found a rival in my mistress' apartment, I stabbed him honorably in the back, while he was unable to defend himself. Others assert, that in the madness of jealousy I slew my mistress; but they do not state how I effected my bloody purpose. Some assert I used a dagger—others that, desirous of witnessing her agony, I used poison. Each has settled it in accordance with his own fancy. Why should not lithographers have the same privilege? I will relate what occurred to me at Padua, nearly fifteen years ago. I had played at a concert with great success. The next day, seated at the table d'hôte, there were about sixty of us, and my entrance in the room had passed unobserved. One of the guests spoke of the great effect I had produced the previous evening. His neighbor concurred in all that was said, and added, 'There is nothing surprising in Paganini's performance—he acquired his talent while confined in a dungeon during eight years, having only his violin to soften the rigors of his confinement. He was condemned for having, coward-like, stabbed one of my friends, who was his rival!' As you may imagine, everyone was shocked by the enormity of my crime. I then addressed myself to the person who was so well acquainted with my history, and requested to know when and where this had taken place. Every eye was directed toward me. Judge the surprise when they recognized the principal actor in this tragic history! The narrator was embarrassed. It was no longer his friend who had been assassinated. He heard—it had been affirmed—he believed; but it was not improbable he had been deceived. This is how an artist's reputation is trifled with, because indolent people

will never comprehend that one may study at liberty as well as under lock and key.

"A still more ridiculous report, at Vienna, tested the credulity of some enthusiasts. I had played the variations entitled *Le Streghe*, and they produced considerable effect. One individual, who was described to me as having a sallow complexion, melancholy air, and bright eye, affirmed that he saw nothing surprising in my performance, for he had distinctly seen, while I was playing my variations, the devil at my elbow, directing my arm and guiding my bow. My resemblance to him was a proof of my origin. He was clothed in red—had horns on his head—and carried his tail between his legs. After so minute a description, you will understand, Sir, it was impossible to doubt the fact; hence, many concluded they had discovered the secret of what they termed my wonderful feats.

"My mind was disturbed for a long time by these reports, and I sought every means to prove their absurdity. I remarked that, from the age of fourteen, I had continued to give concerts, consequently was always before the public; that I had been engaged as leader of the orchestra, and musical director at the Court of Lucca; that if it were true, I had been detained eight years in prison for having assassinated my mistress or my rival, it must have taken place before my appearance in public; that I must have had a mistress and a rival at seven years of age. At Vienna I appealed to the ambassador of my country, who declared he had known me upward of twenty years as an honest man, and I succeeded in suppressing the calumny temporarily; but there are always some remains, and I was not surprised to find

them here. I deem it, however, a duty, before I conclude, to communicate to you an anecdote which gave rise to the injurious reports propagated against me.

"A violinist, of the name of Duranowski, who was at Milan in 1798, connected himself with two persons of disreputable character, and was induced to accompany them to a village, where they proposed assassinating the priest, who was reported to be very rich. Fortunately, the heart of one failed him at the moment of the dreadful deed, and he immediately denounced his accomplices. The police soon arrived on the spot and took Duranowski and his companion prisoners at the moment they arrived at the priest's house. They were condemned to the galleys for twenty years and thrown into a dungeon. But General Menou, after he became governor of Milan, restored Duranowski to liberty after two years' detention. Will you credit it?—upon this groundwork they have constructed my history. It was necessary that the violinist should end in "i," it was Paganini; the assassination became that of my mistress, or my rival; and I it was who was sent to prison,—with this exception, that I was to discover there a new school for the violin; I was not condemned to chains in order that my arms might be at perfect liberty. Since these reports persist, against all probability, I must necessarily bear them with resignation. One hope still remains to me: it is that after my death the calumny will have spent itself, and that those who have avenged themselves so cruelly for my success, will let my ashes repose in peace.—Accept, &c.

PAGANINI."

Parts of this letter appeared in various languages in the leading capitals of Europe.

About the time that Heine and Chopin reached Paris, Paganini left and, picking up several thousand francs at Boulougne and Calais on the way, set sail, like William the Norman, to conquer England.

## XXXVII

### CHILLY LONDON

PARIS is a city of originality, London a city of conformity. A man could walk on his hands down the Grands Boulevards, balancing a parrot on his feet, and he would scarcely attract a glance from the passers-by. If that is his form of amusement, *eh bien, chacun à son goût!* But though the guards have been pacing in front of Buckingham Palace in their red uniforms and high fur hats for centuries, little boys still mimic them and the public turns to stare.

It was a naïve London that welcomed Paganini, not as an artistic sensation but as a sensational artist. Pasta was the actress of the hour, and Lablache was singing the *Barber* to crowded houses. Ballads were in vogue, and the stalls thrilled to *The Soldier Tir'd* and *The Minstrel Boy*, while John Field was quietly creating the *nocturne*. The cultured went to see Kean do *Richard III*, and the crowd enjoyed the ballet of Scott's *Kenilworth*.

"We shall talk of Paganini very much till he comes," announced *The Harmonicon*. "When he arrives, nobody will speak or think of anything else for nine, perhaps eighteen, days: There will be Paganini rondos and waltzes; variations, all *à la Paganini*. We shall have Paganini hats, caps, etc., and the hair of all the beaux patronized by beauty will be after his curious pattern. His influence will extend to our tables and there will be Paganini puffs served up daily. Then, all at once, his very name will cease to be pronounced by



persons of *ton*; and, as a matter of course, people not of *ton*—not of the Devonshire circle, not of Almack's—will imitate those who are: and the Italian player, like the penultimate fashion, will be utterly forgotten!—*in good society*. I will even allow him to flourish here two whole months, provided no chin-chopper" an allusion to Michael Boai, whose performances in London in 1830 consisted of producing tones by merely striking the violin with his chin "arrives in the interim, or *danseuse* with a miraculous toe, to contest the supremacy of his wonderful bow: should any such rival enter the lists with him, his glory will set in less than a moon, and never blaze again."

Shortly before a German prince, touring Great Britain, had said:

"The love of music in England is a mere affair of fashion. There is no nation in Europe which pays music better or understands it less."

And *The Examiner*:

"There cannot be a more inoffensive creature. His sole propensity is to gain money by his art, and his passion to lose it at the gambling table. Paganini's bow (Scottice, *boo*) is almost as wonderful as his bow (Anglice, *fiddle-stick*)—the crawfish would attempt something like it were he on the stage, but not so well."

The public showed quite as much rudeness as the press and caused Paganini endless annoyance by following him in the street, staring at him and even pinching him.

"Although the curiosity to see me had long been satisfied, although I had played in public more than thirty times, and although my portrait has been published in every conceiv-



PORTRAIT BY LYSER

A change from the round-faced boy painted by Ingres in 1819.



able style and pose, I cannot leave my rooms without collecting a crowd, which is content to follow or accompany me; they walk beside me, ahead of me, they speak to me in English, of which I do not understand a word, they touch me as though to make sure that I am flesh and blood. And this does not apply merely to the ordinary crowd, but to the better class of people."

Paganini was in wretched health during his stay in London and his sufferings were increased by the climate. Moreover he understood not a word of the language, which made him as suspicious as a deaf man is of his relatives. Instead of being received with warmth and affection as an artist, he was regarded as a museum piece. Carlyle remembered him as "the one-string fiddler,—a tall, lean, taciturn, abstruse-looking figure—who was then, after his sort, astonishing the idle of mankind."

On his arrival in London, Paganini made a contract with a manager, Laporte, to give a series of concerts. This practical method has since been adopted in the concert field, but at the time it was regarded with horror. The first concert was announced for May 28th:—

#### "THE KING'S THEATRE

"SIGNOR PAGANINI respectfully informs the Nobility, Subscribers, and Frequenters of the Opera, and the Public, that he will give a GRAND MISCELLANEOUS CONCERT OF VOCAL AND INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC, at this Theatre, TO-MORROW EVENING.

*"Prices of Boxes:—*Pit Tier, 8 Guineas; Ground Tier, 10 Guineas; One Pair, 9 Guineas; Two Pair, 6 Guineas; Three Pair, 4 Guineas; Stalls, 2 Guineas; Orchestra, 1½ Guinea; Admission to the Pit, 1 Guinea; Ditto to the Gallery, Half a Guinea."

The papers, whose comments on the Reform Bill had begun to subside, took up the Paganini outrage in a wholly patriotic spirit.

"We have every possible respect for rare talent," said *The Harmonicon*, "and think that it ought to be always most amply rewarded. But even granting the vast superiority of the artist in question—which is yet to be proved to us English people—it will not be disputed, we suppose, that the talent of a mere violinist may be overpaid. That the performances of Signor Paganini would have produced a sum infinitely greater than the most extravagant generosity could have thought adequate, had he succeeded in filling the theater on the terms he proposed, will surely be evident from the subjoined statement. If this does not flash conviction on the minds of all who read it, then indeed is the cause of reason in a hopeless state in this country, and we must consent not only to become the contempt, the laughing-stock of all the world, but expect to find the great bulk of our population inquiring into the moral, if not the legal, right of certain classes to be guilty of such reckless, such unaccountable profusion.

Stalls, 100 at 2 guineas .....	200
Orchestra, 150 at 1½ ditto .....	225
Pit, 800 at 1 ditto .....	800
Pit tier, at 8 ditto .....	344
Ground tier, at 10 ditto .....	430
1st Circle, or one pair, at 9 ditto .....	387
2nd Circle, or two pair, at 6 ditto .....	258
3rd Circle, or four pair, at 4 ditto .....	136
Gallery and slips at 10s. 6d. ....	<u>450</u>
	3,230 guineas



or three thousand three hundred and ninety-one pounds sterling! If this is divided by three, it will appear that for every night, for about an hour's fiddling, Signor Paganini would have been paid two thousand two hundred and sixty pounds; and M. Laporte, for what he would not have expended above a hundred and fifty pounds, if so much, would have received one thousand one hundred and thirty pounds for each concert!

"This was too much for even the English nation to bear. An amiable nobleman of the very highest rank, who is always ready most liberally to patronize, set the example of resistance to such extortion, and indignantly ordered that his box should not be retained."

The amiable nobleman was His Grace, the Duke of Devonshire.

*The Times* said: "Laporte's presumption in doubling the prices of admission to the King's Theater, on the first night of Paganini's performance, is one of those extravagances which could only have entered the head of a foreigner, who had beforehand arrived at the happy conviction, moreover, of the infinite gullibility of the English nation."

*The Courier* came to the defense of Laporte, throwing all the blame on Paganini, and *The Times* the following day retorted with "Figures and facts."

"John Bull is a patient animal up to a certain point; but when he passes this, he always proves himself a determined one; and as he is not easily provoked, so he is not easily pacified. It is understood that up to this moment only two boxes have been taken."

Adding, "Since this was printed we have received the fol-



lowing communication from Mr. Laporte. The fiddler himself should now come forward.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

SIR,—It is with deep regret that I have seen in your paper a paragraph which tends to throw upon me the intended advance of prices at Signor Paganini's concert.

A feeling of delicacy, and the lateness of the hour when, on my return to town, the said paragraph came to my knowledge, do not allow me to enter, for the present, into a minute explanation; but I hope that a further investigation of the case will be granted to me, when I have no doubt my character will be cleared of an undeserved charge, and restored to that public estimation which it has ever been the aim of my exertions to obtain.

I have the honor to remain,

Your obedient humble servant,

F. F. LAPORTE.

This is but a suggestion of the violent dissertations which graced the daily papers. The concert never took place. English democracy had been wounded, and Paganini's intestine served him well for once.

The day before the proposed concert the papers carried a letter:—

*Sir,*

Finding myself too unwell, I request you will respectfully inform the public that the Concert announced for tomorrow will not take place.

Your obedient Servant,

NICOLO PAGANINI.

An editorial on concert banditerie in *The Times*:—

It is to be feared and we announce it with some concern, conscious that we may possibly have contributed our share to the calamity, that Signor Paganini, displeased at the "bad taste" of the English nation in not coming forward with a contribution of four thousand pounds for one of his inimitable performances, has determined on withdrawing from this country without suffering even one of his notes to be heard within it! Was there ever an event more to be deplored—more fatal in its consequences—than this? We lose not only the wonder of art with which Europe has rung for years past, but our character for taste—for hospitality even—is irretrievably gone. That science, which his stay among us was to have improved so much, must remain in its present state of barbarity. The ingratitude of Signor Paganini's reception is as striking as its other bad concomitants. He had set out on the tour of Europe, his halo of glory blazing round him, in the shape of biographical anecdotes and newspaper criticisms, and every town to which he advanced, consequently, was ready to purchase, at a higher price, sounds realizing the idea of Apollo and his lyre. A climax of golden anticipations floated before his imagination, at the top of which was England.

"The Friends of Paganini" through the columns of *The Observer* explained that Paganini was just farmed out to Laporte and in no way responsible for the prices, and "An Entire Stranger to All the Parties" tried to establish justice all around.

Another Constant Reader showed that at Calais Paganini only charged five francs, and that the readers "may rest assured that if they only hold back, they will find the prices at the King's Theater reduced by Signor Paganini and his colleagues to whatever they can get."

The violinist and the impresario passed the blame back and forth and the "Articles between Signor Paganini and M. Laporte" were good front page news for several weeks. John Bull had never been so outraged. Fancy two pounds to hear a fiddler! Not so long after, in America, a ticket for Jenny Lind sold for six hundred and sixty-five dollars, bringing music almost up to the level of the prize ring.

The institution of the claque, prevalent on the Continent, was not considered quite sporting in London. A group of seedy and needy foreigners, who hung about in groups in the parks and along the embankment, finding themselves with no occupation, would frequently besiege a compatriot and for a small sum they would occupy the galleries of the theaters, where their "pertinacious manual exercises and their laudatory vociferations" became serious annoyances to those about them. It is possible that Paganini, according to the continental custom, availed himself of their services, which did not add to his popularity with the press.

The opening concert was announced for June 3rd at His Majesty's Theater but the public was angered and had to be placated. The editor of *The Times* received a letter which *The Globe* and *The Courier* copied:—

*Sir*,—Oblige me by inserting in your next paper the following letter, which I pray you to translate literally.

The evening of my first concert in the King's Theatre is now so near that I feel the duty of announcing it myself, to implore the favour of the English nation, which honours the arts as much as I respect it.

Accustomed in all the nations of the Continent to double the ordinary prices of the theatres where I have given my concerts,

# Theatre Royal, Drury Lane.

The Nobility, Gentry, and the Public, are respectfully informed, that arrangements have been made with

## SIGNOR PAGANINI,

### Series of Four Concerts;

THE FIRST OF WHICH WILL TAKE PLACE

On **WEDNESDAY** Next, **JULY 10, 1833,**

In the course of which he will perform

Some of his most Established and Popular Pieces.

#### PART I.

GRAND OVERTURE TO EURYANTHE. .... (Weber)  
BALLAD, Mr. TEMPLETON *Two days a Young Lassie*  
ARIA, M<sup>rs</sup>. BETTS *Long and Luculent*

GRAND CONCERTO allegro Maestoso,  
Composed and Performed

By **SIGNOR PAGANINI.**

ALL, M<sup>rs</sup>. BETTS *The Sultan's Third*

#### PART II.

GRAND OVERTURE TO THE MAGIC FLUTE. .... (Mozart.)  
ALL, M<sup>rs</sup>. BETTS *The Wizard's Song*

GRAND SONATA MILITAIRE,

(in which will be introduced Mozart's Aria, "NON PIU ANDRAI,"  
composed and to be performed

ON ONE STRING ONLY. (The Fourth)

By **SIGNOR PAGANINI.**

ALL, Mr. TEMPLETON and M<sup>rs</sup>. BETTS *When they have*

The Evening's Entertainment will conclude with the Ballet of The

### Pages of The Duke de Vendome.

Produced under the Direction of Mr. GILBERT, Master of Ballet.

Duke de Vendome, Mr. GILBERT, Master of Ballet.

Count de More, Mr. F. COOK, ..... Mr. GILBERT, Master of Ballet.

Pages, M<sup>rs</sup>. BETTS, (a Noble) Mr. WILLIAMS, ..... M<sup>rs</sup>. BETTS, Master of Ballet.

Engage, M<sup>rs</sup>. BETTS, (a Noble) Mr. WILLIAMS, ..... M<sup>rs</sup>. BETTS, Master of Ballet.

Princess, M<sup>rs</sup>. BETTS, (a Noble) Mr. WILLIAMS, ..... M<sup>rs</sup>. BETTS, Master of Ballet.

Maiden de St. Ange, M<sup>rs</sup>. BETTS, (a Noble) Mr. WILLIAMS, ..... M<sup>rs</sup>. BETTS, Master of Ballet.

Count, M<sup>rs</sup>. BETTS, (a Noble) Mr. WILLIAMS, ..... M<sup>rs</sup>. BETTS, Master of Ballet.

The Public is respectfully requested to take notice, that

**There will be no advance of Prices.**  
which will be as usual

**BOXES 7s. PIT 3s. 6d. GALLERY 2s.**

\*The Dramatic Part of the Theatre does not extend to the first nights, as the  
prices of the first nights are not the same as the other nights, and the first nights are not  
of the same price as the other nights.

The Box Office is open daily from 10 to 12

London: Printed by

25 Pall Mall, P.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF A LONDON CONCERT  
"There will be no advance in prices" was to placate  
the indignant British public which refused to patron-  
ize his first concert when the prices were doubled.



and little instructed in the customs of this capital, in which I present myself for the first time, I did believe that I could do the same; but, informed by many of the journals that the prices already established there are higher than those on the Continent, and having myself seen that the observation was just, I second willingly the desire of a public, the esteem and the good will of which I ambition as my first recompense.

*London, June 1st.*

NICOLÒ PAGANINI.

Though the nobility, gentry and public were most respectfully urged to hear the great Signor Paganini it was only the public which availed itself of the privilege, as only two boxes were taken. The audience consisted largely of "musicians and violinists," according to an amateur of the day, "all anxious to get to the front seats because they had to pay for their places, Paganini not having given a single ticket away."

In those days, contrary to the present custom, it was the soloist who engaged the orchestra. Paganini engaged the Philharmonic Orchestra, and Spagnoletti, Dragonetti, Lindley and other members placed themselves so as to see him to the best advantage. His program opened with the Beethoven *Second Symphony*, though the symphonies of one Neukomm were far more popular that season.

Lablache sang *Largo Al Factotum*. A breathless silence ensued until Paganini "glided" in and was greeted by a burst of cheering. "With the tip of his bow he set off the orchestra in a grand military movement, with a force and vivacity as surprising as it was new. At the termination of this introduction, he commenced with a soft dreamy note of celestial quality; and, with three or four whips of his bow, elicited



points of sound that mounted to the third heaven. A scream of astonishment and delight burst from the audience at the novelty of this effect."

It was the *Concerto in D*.

The members of the orchestra had not heard Paganini in rehearsal, as he had, according to his custom, only given his cues. So extraordinary was the spell of enchantment which he cast over them that when a book on one of the stands caught fire, it burned for some time unobserved until their attention was called to it by the audience. After a few orchestral numbers, to give the audience a chance to whisper, Paganini played his *Nel Cor Piu* on one string, "so plaintive and desolate that the heart was torn."

The vocal performances by Mme. Lalande, Mles. Beck, Curioni and Santini received polite attention. Paganini's third number was the *Military Sonata for the G. string* based on Mozart's *Non Piu Andrai*, of which *The Tattler* says:—

"The precision, too, with which he dashed from the lowest note of the string to the opposite extreme, and all with the utmost indifference of manner, was one of the commonest of his achievements."

Paganini was the first artist to perform without music and *The Athenæum* remarked:—

"He plays without a reading desk or book stand; this gives an air of *improvising* to his performance, which we hope to see imitated, if any one be found hardy enough to undertake a violin solo for the next seven years."

Mori vowed that he would burn his fiddle, adding thriftily, "if I cannot sell it"; Lindley, who stammered, said, "It is the d-d-devil," and Dragonetti, the famous double bass,

growled, "She is a mighty spirit." There is a story told that at the début of Heifetz in New York a famous violinist in the audience complained to Josef Hofmann that it was very hot.

"Not for pianists," Hofmann is said to have replied.

Something very similar was said by Cramer at Paganini's London début.

Moscheles said that he "had to play nearly everything twice over, . . . every lady leaned forward out of her box to wave her handkerchief at him; people in the pit stood up on the benches, shouting 'Hurrah! Bravo!' Neither Sontag nor Pasta made such an impression here. Had that long-drawn, soul-searching tone lost for a single second its balance, it would have lapsed into a discordant cat's mew; but it never did so. The thin strings of his instrument, on which alone it was possible to conjure forth those myriads of notes and trills and cadenzas, would have been fatal in the hands of any other violin player."

After the sixth concert Moscheles is less enthusiastic:—

"My mind is peculiarly vacillating about this artist. First of all, nothing could exceed my surprise and admiration; his constant and venturesome flights, his newly discovered source of flageolet tones, his gift of fusing and beautifying subjects so completely bewildered my musical perceptions, that for several days afterwards my head seemed on fire, and my brain reeled. I never wearied of the intense expression, soft and melting like that of an Italian singer, which he could draw from his violin, and dazzled as I was, I could not quarrel with him for adopting the '*maniera del gatto*,' a term of opprobrium, showing how averse the Italians are to this

style, which I dislike so intensely that I should only like to hear it once in every leap year. Suffice it to say, my admiration of this phenomenon, equally endowed by nature and art, was boundless. Now, however, after hearing him frequently, all this is changed; in every one of his compositions I discover *the same* effects, which betrays a poverty of invention; I also find both his style and manner of playing monotonous. His concertos are beautiful, and have even their grand moments; but they remind me of a brilliant firework on a summer's eve, one flash succeeding the other—effective, admirable—but always the same. His *Sonate Militaire*, and other pieces have a southern glow about them, but this hero of the violin cannot dispense with the roll of the drum; and completely as he may annihilate his less showy colleagues, I long for a little of Spohr's earnestness, Baillot's power, and even Mayseder's piquancy. It may possibly be that the man, who grows more and more *antipatico* to me every day, prejudices my judgment of the artist. He is so disgracefully mean. I can't vouch for the truth of the story, that he gave his servant a gallery ticket on the condition of his serving him gratuitously for one day, but this at all events is certain, that Lablache offered him a hundred pounds to play at his benefit, but Paganini refused, and the great singer had to allow him one-third of the receipts of the concert. When the Opera concerts, thirteen in number, ceased to command full attendances, he began a series in the London Tavern, in the City. This was thought unworthy of a great artist; but it was all one to him, for he makes money there."

Paganini was a visitor at the Moscheles house where he met Hummel, Neukomm and other musical celebrities.

He always brought clippings about himself which Mrs. Moscheles translated for him. Mr. Embden, her father, rendered Paganini a services and Moscheles tells of Paganini's visit to express his gratitude.

"On his first visit to us, his gratitude found vent in such exaggerated expressions as are known only to an Italian vocabulary, we were the children of his *onoratissimo*, etc., and he took down from the mantelpiece a miniature portrait of his benefactor, covered it with kisses, and addressed it with the most high-flown epithets."

A short time later:—

"My assistance is of use to him here, and I am paid with quite as many honeyed epithets as my father-in-law received. This face of mine is as much kissed as my father-in-law's painted one. Paganini often comes to us. We receive him well, although I suspect he is rather too sweet to be genuine."

It did not take long for this suspicion to be confirmed. Paganini agreed to have Moscheles arrange some of his *Gems* for the piano. After the appearance of the third volume, Paganini made a legal protest, declaring the work a piracy. Moscheles recalled to him that he had granted his permission.

"Yes, for the first book, but not for the second and third," was the reply. Paganini demanded five thousand pounds damages, but withdrew his claim, and Moscheles rejoiced "at being quit of an episode so little worthy of an artist, and having done with those dreadful lawyers."

A second concert, given on June 10th, was well attended and the receipts almost double that of the first. Paganini

played *The Campanella* with the bell accompaniment played by Lablache.

The number of concerts extended to fifteen, at intervals of a few days. The receipts totaled 10,208 pounds. Each concert was the last, positively the last, absolutely the ultimate farewell. The stalls and pit were filled though few of the boxes were taken after the third performance. *The Harmonicon* states:—

“ . . . the violinist has not been what is called the fashion, though run after by great numbers of amateurs.”

Paganini played at some benefit concerts during the season, taking one-third of the gross receipts. This so angered Lablache and Rubini that they refused to sing where he played. He also gave concerts at the London Tavern, which was considered unbecoming the dignified art of classical music by a community whose programs were interspersed with ballads such as *Faithful Ellen* and *When Thy Bosom*.

“Signor Paganini, however, was too liberal-minded, too generous, to labor only for the delight of the west end of the town; he took compassion on those east of Temple Bar, nay, east of the Royal Exchange, and gave a concert at the London Tavern.”

When Boccherini played trios with the King of Spain and the Emperor of Austria, the Emperor asked him which of them played better.

Boccherini replied, “Sire, Charles IV plays like a king, but your Imperial Highness plays like an Emperor.”

Paganini displayed no such tact when William IV inquired about conditions for a court performance. He replied



that his price was a thousand pounds sterling. The king's representative offered him half the sum.

"His Majesty can hear me at one of my concerts under conditions more acceptable to him," Paganini replied.

What was the King of England to a man who had sent the message "Paganini never repeats" when an encore was demanded by the King of Sardinia?

Paganini's departure from London was as ill-advised as his arrival.

The criticisms had been as diverse as in continental cities, but on a grander scale. His violin was compared to a wild animal which he endeavored to quiet with lashes of the bow, and to the squeaking of mice.

The thing that particularly irritated the press, however, was Paganini's lingering farewell. *The Harmonicon* takes it up:—

"In our last, we spoke of Signor Paganini's *final last* concert; then *one more*; and afterwards of an ADDITIONAL *one more*; but the latter (the eleventh), was followed by no less than five others, the *actual last* having been given on Saturday the 20th ult. At all these he did little more than repeat what he had previously performed; but an extra feat was exhibited on the concluding evening, namely, an imitation of cock-crowing, and the clucking of the hen. This was 'rapturously encored,' as some of the papers tell us, but raptures on such an occasion throw discredit on the applause bestowed by these *fanatici* at the former concerts.

"We declared our belief that the Signor would continue to play so long as anything was to be received, however, small the sum; the event has proved our opinion to be well



grounded, for the profits of the last performance were very trifling; tickets were given in abundance, and groups admitted at the doors by a simple order to pass. Still the grasping Italian got *something* for he contributed not a single farthing to the expenses, which indeed amounted to but little; a hundred pounds would have covered them any one night, though a report has been industriously propagated that they exceeded three!"

Another account, by Dubourg, of the same concert:—

"At his (so-called) farewell Concert at the King's Theater two of the pieces he selected for his display were especially remarkable in the treatment. One of them, a *fandango* of very bizarre character, performed on the fourth string, consisted, in part, of a sort of whiningly amorous colloquy between two birds. An incidental *crowing*, like that of a cock, was privately conjectured by one of the musical men present, to be the artist's medium of conveying an oblique satire upon *the audience*, as the subdued vassals of his will. No impression of the kind, however, existed with *them*, for they demanded the repetition of the affair. The other piece was our National Anthem of "*God Save the King*," certainly an ill-selected subject for exhibition on a single instrument and, in the treatment of it (if I may venture to advance my own impressions experienced at the time), too full of sliding, and as it were *puling*, to satisfy the pre-conception derived from the fullness, steadiness and grandeur, characteristic of the original composition."

The interest in Paganini was not confined to musical matters. *The Lady's Magazine* indulges in a little gossip:—

"Paganini is engaged to perform before their Majesties the

Queen's concert on Friday. There is a rumor afloat about the Opera House, that he has already lost his heart and offered his hand to the lady who stole it. The lady is said to be a pupil of Signor de Begnis, and in her sixteenth year."

In July three concerts were given at Norwich, where the local manager was a heavy loser. Then Cheltenham, where another disagreeable experience occurred. Paganini had agreed to give only two concerts. They were well supported and one of the subscription balls of the Rotunda was relinquished in order to permit its patrons to hear the violinist. But when it was announced that he would give a third performance there was an incipient riot. Hand bills were printed requesting the nobility and gentry of the town to patronize the ball. This so depleted attendance at the theater that Paganini refused to perform. The manager offered to refund the admission, but the people had set out to hear a one-string fiddler and demanded that he fulfill his engagement. He returned to the hall and played his most popular pieces to the delight of the persistent few. At midnight he left Cheltenham for London. This incident formed another meaty topic for *The Times*.

Toward the end of August, Paganini set sail for Ireland, having been engaged for the first Music Festival of Dublin.

## XXXVIII

### THE IRISH LISTEN TO MUSIC

**N**o one saw Paganini arrive in Dublin so it was decided that he had been wafted across the Irish Sea by the Flying Dutchman. His place of lodging was equally mysterious, and caused much comment. Perhaps he merely kept his whereabouts a secret in order to avoid being peeped at and pinched.

The evening of his first concert found the theater filled with Dublin Society, with the Lord Lieutenant and all his suite. The conductor, Sir George Smart, led the virtuoso to the center of the stage amid the usual outburst of applause. In the silence that followed Paganini went through the preliminary motions of adjusting his violin and bow. He paused just a moment too long before beginning. An impatient occupant of the gallery shouted:

"Well, we're all ready."

The entire house burst out laughing. Paganini, white with rage, turned to Sir George demanding to know what had been said. Whatever the explanation was, it did not satisfy him, for he turned and stamped off the stage, hugging his violin. The disappointed audience had to be dismissed. It was some time before he was induced to appear again in Dublin, but when he did so, he completely won the enthusiastic Irish public, who demanded that he stand on the piano to be

better seen. He did not, however, subdue them into silence. At one performance, when he played *The Campanella*, an excited man shouted above the applause:

"Arrah now, Signor Paganini, have a drop of whiskey, darling, and ring the bell again!"

A tour of twenty-three concerts in Ireland, and a departure as quiet and mysterious as his arrival, and we next find Paganini in Bristol, where he was welcomed with the following lampoon:

PAGANINI

TO THE CITIZENS OF BRISTOL

*Fellow Citizens*,—It is with feelings of unqualified disgust that I witness the announcement of SIGNOR PAGANINI's Performance to take place in this City: Why at this period of Distress? With the recollection of so many scenes of misery still fresh in our minds and while SUBSCRIPTIONS are required to the extent of our means in order to FEED and CLOTHE the POOR: Why is this FOREIGN FIDDLER now to appear? for the purpose of draining those resources which would be infinitely better applied in the exercise of the best feeling of man—CHARITY. Do not suffer yourselves to be imposed upon by the Payment of Charges which are well worthy the name of extortion; rather suffer under the imputations of a want of TASTE than support any of the tribe of Foreign MUSIC-MONSTERS, who collect the Cash of this Country and waft it to their own shores, laughing at the infatuation of John Bull.

December 10th, 1831

PHILADELPHUS.

During the three coldest months Paganini toured the English Provinces giving about fifty concerts. At Leeds an efficient management made a liberal donation to the poor out of the receipts. It is said that Paganini's profits there

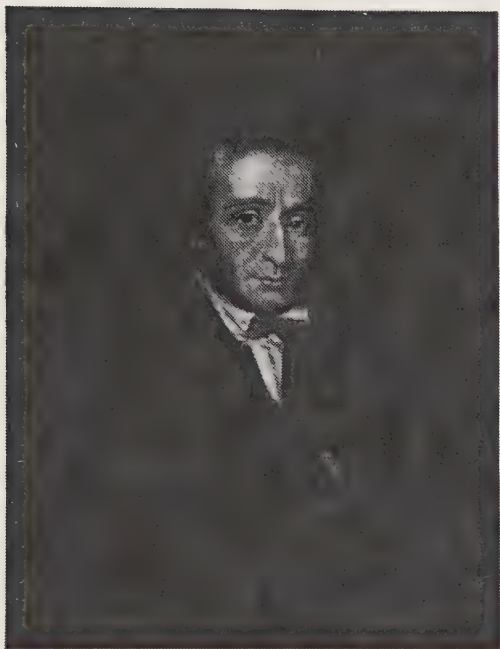
alone amounted to thousands of pounds. At Brighton the usual display of the avarice of the artist and the acrimony of the press took place. Paganini's price was two hundred guineas; as the theater when filled would not produce that much, the manager had to raise the prices. At Birmingham, in February, there was such an influx of strangers that the town could not accommodate them. We know how the residents of that city pronounced the name of the artist by a popular song which became the rage:—

It's well worth a guinea,  
To hear Paganini,  
To see how he curls his hair.

At one concert in London a "respected citizen," undoubtedly a Constant Reader of *The Times*, rose from his seat and pointing a finger at the virtuoso, said in soap-box tones:—

"Well, are none of you blushing at having paid one guinea to hear such a miserable musician and mountebank, whose merit consists in being able to get a tone out of a dirty wooden shoe dressed up with catgut? Can't you find a better use for your money? Isn't it better to give it to the poor? Do you see this great charlatan who looks like the devil? Who is laughing at your stupidity and pockets your sovereigns? Go on, you are nothing but a lot of jackasses."

Paganini, fearing he was about to be assassinated, had already left by the back door.



PORTRAIT BY MAURIN  
"Music and poetry are sisters,"  
observes Paganini.

*musica e poesia sono sorelle*  
*Niccolò Paganini*  
*Birmingham 4. febbraio 1831.*





## XXXIX

### HUMILIATION

ON March 8th, after having given about a hundred and thirty-two concerts, Paganini recrossed the Channel. He had filled the hearts and emptied the pockets of the common people. He had eaten Yorkshire pudding and listened to speeches about the Reform Bill. He had brightened up many a dull issue of *The Harmonicon* and had filled a complete issue of *The Musical Gem*, a red plush book used to ornament drawing room tables. He had had his portrait painted by George Patten, and had nearly frozen to death.

"At last I shall hear a little music again," he said on debarking at Le Havre, which he did at his own concert in that city. He entered Paris along with the cholera and gave a benefit concert at the opera house for the sufferers.

"Deeply grieved by the sorrow which afflicts all humanity, I should like to give a concert, the receipts from which shall be devoted to the victims of the cruel scourge which has come over the capital."

He gave many concerts in Paris and Versailles, adding entries to his bank book. In July he returned to the unfriendly shores of England to remain through the fall. He stopped to give a concert at Boulogne, where he made arrangements for the Philharmonic Society, an amateur organization, to assist. The members of this orchestra demanded

the usual number of free admissions for their friends and relatives as recognition for their assistance. Paganini refused, saying that in a small concert hall so many passes would cut seriously into the receipts. They were insistent, however, so Paganini declared his intention of engaging a professional orchestra. The amateurs threatened the professionals with loss of patronage and pupils if they took part in the concert, and the unfortunate artists had to yield. Paganini determined to give the concert without accompaniment. A number of *senori filarmonici* bought admission in order to hiss the violinist; but their hissing was soon drowned by the plaudits of those members of the audience who had come merely to hear music.

One of the local writers said, "The Amateurs of Boulogne have made for themselves a niche in the history of art—they have hissed Paganini."

There was still greater humiliation to come. During his entire career Paganini had played to enthusiastic crowds, or to vast caverns of reproachful emptiness, but he had never played before an indifferent audience. At Brussels he was befriended by Fétis, then the director of the Royal Conservatory and played a number of times at his house. But at the *Théâtre de la Monnaie*, his appearance was greeted with a burst of laughter before he had even touched his instrument. Standing alone on an empty stage, wondering if it could be only the grotesquerie of his appearance, accustomed to ridicule yet always wounded afresh, Paganini looked out across the blinding lights at these strange people who came to hear an artist perform and sat shrieking with laughter. He was able to bear it, however, in the knowledge that when

he touched his bow to the strings he would turn his scoffers into supplicants, as he had so often done before. But the music only increased their laughter. Here was a violinist who was not a member of the Belgian school, not even a *Premier Prix*! He played according to no known system. And how ridiculously he held his violin!

At Bruges, which then had thirty-three thousand inhabitants, a subscription concert showed fourteen signatures. He sailed with relief for a comparatively friendly England. Only Monsieur Fétis remained his friend. He did not even mention the Brussels debacle in his book, perhaps out of consideration for Paganini.

On Paganini's second visit to England he played in London and the Provinces, and while he pleased the public, the gentlemen who came on free tickets took little notice of him. He returned to France in the fall, a sadder but a richer man.

While in Manchester, there came word of the death of his mother. He knew that with all her other children at her bedside, it was his arms that she wanted around her. He had loved his mother so much that he had never been able to love another woman. His pizzicato notes had been little more than the marking of time until he could go home with his baby and say, "Mother, this is Achille." With the same post that brought the terrible news came hints and suggestions of other matters from his sister. Paganini's reply is a contradiction of his miserliness.

"I have shed bitter tears over the loss of our beloved mother and am still weeping. But let us be comforted in the hope that, thanks to her prayers to the Saviour, we may meet again in Paradise. As for the wishes she expressed in the

will with regard to your share, I shall see to that, because of the good care she received at your hands. Draw the pension, therefore, that she had and whatever I can do in the future for the advancement of your son, my nephew, shall be done. In the meantime be of good cheer and give your husband good advice."

## XL

### PAGANINI PRESENTS BERLIOZ WITH 20,000 FRANCS

**I**N order to pay his wife's debts, Berlioz gave a benefit entertainment. His friends all came to his assistance. Dumas, Liszt, Chopin, Ferdinand Hiller. That Paganini's name did not appear on the program was stimulus to an unfriendly press. Jules Janin led the attack in *Le Journal des Débats*:—

How was he received here, this grotesque being, this living corpse, Paganini! The walls of Paris would have been stormed if the gates had not been wide enough! . . . To hear him, even the fear of the cholera was overcome. And today? Now he is dead for us! The miser has killed the artist in him. On that day on which Paganini returned from London, laden with gold, refusing to play at a benefit concert for some poor English actors whose last source of help was exhausted, he lost all credit with us. He may journey in France, wherever he chooses, at all places his violin will have to remain in its case, damned to useless silence.

*L'Europe Littéraire* took up the refrain:—

Paganini condescended to gather in a contribution of seven or eight hundred francs in England; the magic of his bow is mightier than the sceptre of many a ruler. . . . Miss Smithson begs Paganini from her bed of pain to play one little piece for her sake.

Mr. Paganini declines.



Paganini gave no more concerts in Paris that year. The tenor of public opinion made it inadvisable.

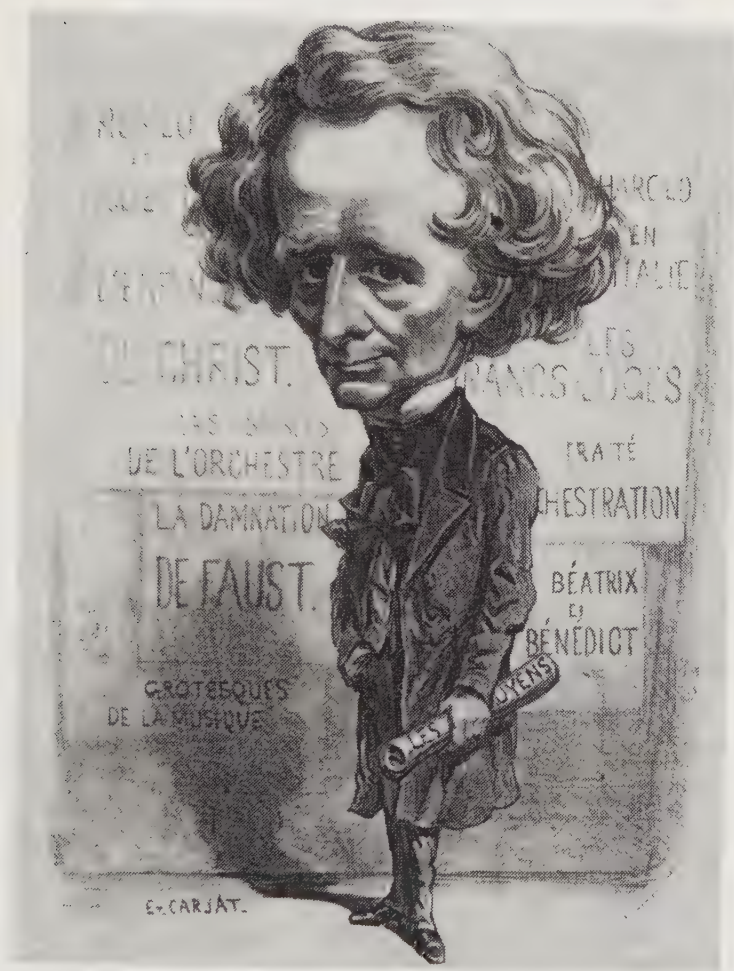
There is a gap, however, in the evidence. Berlioz, who has confessed every nuance of his musical life in two long volumes, makes no mention of Paganini's refusal to play at his concert. In fact he tells of first meeting Paganini eight months after the benefit. He had engaged some of the best artists to perform his own compositions and his triumph was a vindication of the new musical ideal for which he had been fighting.

"My musicians beamed with joy and, to crown all, when the audience had dispersed, I found waiting for me a man with long black hair, piercing eyes, and wasted form—genius-haunted, a colossus among giants—whom I had never seen before, yet who stirred within me a strange emotion. Catching my hand, he poured forth a flood of burning praise and appreciation that fired my heart and head. It was Paganini. Thus began my friendship with that great artist to whom I owe so much and whose generosity towards me has given rise to such absurd and wicked reports."

The friendship between Paganini and Berlioz was based on the violinist's admiration for the composer. The polyphony of Berlioz—conventional as it seems to us now—was revolutionary to Paganini. He asked Berlioz to write a solo for the viola, as he wished to make his *début* on that instrument. Berlioz demurred and Paganini insisted. To please him the Frenchman wrote one with orchestral accompaniment.

Paganini was not pleased with it. "This won't do. There are too many rests. I must be playing all the time."

His health necessitated his departure from Paris and the



### HECTOR BERLIOZ

Paganini was one of the first to appreciate the genius of Berlioz, whose *Roméo et Juliette* may have been made possible by Paganini's generosity.



matter was dropped. Berlioz, ruminating over the idea, wove about the viola solo a series of scenes taken from his memories of his wanderings in the Abruzzi, and so wrote *Harold in Italy*.

Paganini did not hear it until four years later. At the same time he witnessed what Berlioz referred to as the "slaughter" of his *Benvenuto Cellini*.

"If I were the manager of the Opera," said Paganini, "I would commission this young man today to write me three operas; I should pay him in advance and I should make a capital bargain of it."

Berlioz, suffering from acute bronchitis and chronic poverty, forced himself to give two more concerts. At the second he performed his *Symphonie Fantastique*, which had so revolutionized symphonic music, and *Harold*. After the performance Berlioz, exhausted from the effort of interpreting himself, bathed in perspiration, trembling, saw the orchestra door open and Paganini come through, preceded by little Achille who was gesticulating violently. Paganini's throat affection at the time prevented him from speaking and Achille climbed on a chair and put his ear to his father's mouth to interpret his words.

"My father desires me to assure you, Monsieur, that never has he been so impressed; that your music has quite upset him, and that if he did not restrain himself, he would go down on his knees and thank you."

Berlioz, confused and embarrassed, became equally speechless. Paganini seized his arm and dragged him onto the stage, where several members of the orchestra still lingered. There,

before them, the man of fifty-six knelt and kissed the hand of a man of thirty-five.

Berlioz returned home to his sick bed. The next day, as he lay ill and alone, Achille came to see him.

"My father will be very sorry you are ill," he said; "if he had not been ill himself, he would have come to see you. He told me to give you this letter."

Berlioz began to open the letter, but the child stopped him.

"He said you must read it alone. There is no answer." And he hurried out. The letter written in Italian, has now become famous:—

*My dear Friend,*

Beethoven dead, only Berlioz now can revive him; and I, who have enjoyed your divine compositions, worthy of the genius which you are, entreat you to accept, in token of my homage twenty thousand francs, which will be remitted you by the Baron de Rothschild on presentation of the enclosed. Believe me always your most affectionate friend,

*Paris, December 18th, 1838.*

NICOLO PAGANINI.

Enclosed was a note in French to M. de Rothschild:—

*Monsieur le Baron*—Would you be so good as to hand over the 20,000 francs that I deposited yesterday to M. Berlioz.

PAGANINI.

Berlioz's emotion caused him to burst into tears. His wife, coming in, thought one more had been added to their succession of calamities.

"What is it now?" she cried.

"Paganini—has sent me—20,000 francs."

Henriette and her son, Louis, kneeled at the bed and thanked God and Paganini.

This episode was not kept secret. Berlioz was besieged by friends demanding to know the facts.

"Then began the comments, fury and lies of my opponents, followed by the congratulatory letter of Janin and his eloquent article in the *Débats*."

Many of them, he says, were jealous, not of him, but of a man who was rich enough to do such deeds. For a week he was too ill to thank Paganini personally and his letter, as he says, was too inadequate to be recorded. Eventually he hurried to the *Néothermes*, where he found Paganini in the billiard room.

"When he saw me, the tears came to his eyes (I confess that I was nearly crying myself); he wept, this ferocious man-eater, this seducer of women, this escaped convict, as he has so often been called; he wept hot tears as he embraced me.

" 'Don't mention another word about it,' he said; 'I deserve no credit; it was the greatest joy, the deepest satisfaction I ever felt in my life; you have caused me emotions of which I never dreamed; you have gone a step farther in the great art of Beethoven.'

"Then, drying his eyes and hitting the table with a strange little laugh, he began to talk volubly, but as I could not understand him, he went to call his son, to serve as interpreter. With the help of little Achille I understood that he said:

" 'Oh! I am so glad; I am overjoyed to think that all this vermin who scribbled and talked against you will not be so



bold now because they all realize that I, Paganini, know what I am about—I am not easy.’ ”

Which may have meant that he was not easy to please or not easy with money.

It silenced neither the enemies of Berlioz nor those of Paganini. Berlioz asked his friend's advice as to the work he was to undertake, and Paganini replied, with more understanding than most patrons:

“I cannot advise you; you know best what suits you.”

It was during the three years of “rest, light work, liberty and happiness,” made possible by this gift that Berlioz wrote *Romeo and Juliet*, which Paganini never heard.

“I did it for Berlioz and for myself. For Berlioz because I saw a young man full of genius, whose strength and courage might have failed in this struggle, in which he was engaged every day against envious mediocrity or indifferent ignorance. For myself, because in years to come I will be vindicated in this affair, and when my claims to musical glory are counted, it will not be one of the least to have been the first to recognize a genius, and to have held him up to the admiration of all.”

How much this vindicates Paganini's musical judgment is still a point of dispute. As for his one great act of generosity—even that has been denied him. By some it is said that the gift was made by the advice of Janin to conciliate Berlioz, who was at the time writing music criticism. As Paganini was no longer giving concerts and as he would have had to dispense his whole fortune to conciliate all his enemies of the press at twenty thousand francs apiece, there is little

reason to credit this story. Moreover it is hardly likely that Paganini would connive with his enemy, Janin.

According to another version he was merely acting in the name of a generous patroness of art, who wished to show her appreciation anonymously. Ferdinand Hiller in his *Künstlerleben* says that Armand Bertin, the wealthy proprietor of *Le Journal des Débats*, knowing of Berlioz's struggles, wished to facilitate his work and, thinking that the gift would be more acceptable as a token of admiration from one musician to another, asked Paganini to make the presentation. This assertion was founded on a remark of Rossini's, but as Rossini was in Italy from 1836 until 1855, he could hardly have been a first hand authority and must have been repeating gossip. The most authoritative evidence on the subject is given by Sir Charles Hallé. He learned from Madame Bertin many years after that her husband wished to help Berlioz without appearing as the donor, for what would have appeared as a simple gratuity from a rich editor to one of his staff became a significant tribute from one genius to another. Berlioz died in the belief that the money had come from Paganini's pocket.

## XLI

### MISS WATSON

THE illustrious hand was permitted no rest; when not bowing, it was writing letters to the press to refute accusations of avarice or to make public denial of scandal in a day when libel laws were seldom invoked. In the year 1834 London was not too occupied with her music festival in the Abbey, Princess Victoria's piano lessons, or the fire in the House of Lords, to devote attention to the kidnaping scandal of Signor Paganini.

The previous season Paganini had boarded with a Mr. Watson, an American, in Grey's Inn Lane and had given a few concerts with the assistance "of the celebrated vocalists,

MISS WELLS

*and*

MISS WATSON

*likewise*

MR. WATSON

composers of the Theatre Royale, English Opera House and Covent Garden and members of the Royal Academy of Music."

Miss Wells sang *John Anderson, My Joe* and Miss Watson obliged with *The Banks of Allanwater* and *The Bonnie Wee*

*Wife*. There were duets by Miss Wells and Miss Watson, "with Mr. Watson at the piano forte."

Hardly had Paganini landed in Boulogne, when the French papers published columns of news about his elopement with a sixteen-year-old girl. He had evidently arranged a marriage in Paris. She had left her home secretly to meet him in Boulogne, but her father, having been warned by a well-wisher, managed to anticipate his daughter by one boat. He informed the French authorities at Calais of his misfortune and of the abuse of confidence of which his guest had been guilty. He presented credentials to *Monsieur le Commissaire de Police*, who put his agents at his disposal for the night. "When the tender fugitive, on debarking, found herself face to face with her father"—to say nothing of several policemen—"he claimed her as his daughter and conducted her to his hotel despite the clamors of a messenger from Paganini who protested desperately this outrage against individual liberty. Miss Watson was accompanied by Monsieur H.—a business man of London, very capable, they say, in arranging affairs of ill-fated lovers who seek his talents. As far as Paganini is concerned," continued the report, "he was not particularly moved by this disappointment; the creations of his genius, those celestial airs which with one stroke of his magic bow he is able to wake, may easily console him for the loss of one mere mortal."

The *Annotateur* of Boulogne vouches for the authenticity of the story with "which the English press, so fond of private scandal, will undoubtedly occupy itself very much." Paganini's reply was not denied space:—

"Sir:

"Accused of being the ravisher of a young person of sixteen years, my tarnished honor imposes on me the painful but necessary task of bringing back the facts to the truth.

"Lifting the veil of the initial W——, which your management has reserved for my calumniator, while you name me completely, I will, in my turn, show Mr. Watson under some of these hideous guises. . . .

"Mr. Watson, accompanied by a Miss Wells, who is not his wife, and by Miss Watson, his daughter, had made a contract with me to give some joint concerts. This contract has not at all ruined Mr. Watson, because for a long time it was executed by me, not only with fidelity, but even with abnegation of my best interests. During my last trip to London I had to take in charge the expenses of the hotel which should have been paid in common. Afterwards I loaned Mr. Watson fifty pounds. Put in prison by his creditors for the fourth time within five years, I furnished from my pocket forty-five pounds to free him. I had, by my contract, reserved for myself the right to give a farewell concert for my benefit, but at his plea, after his release from prison, I renounced this agreement in order to give one for his daughter, in order that his creditors should not appropriate the receipts, reserving for myself only fifty pounds. His daughter returned to him one hundred and twenty pounds net profit from the concert.

"Such was, Monsieur, my manner of acting towards Mr. Watson, whose antecedents, I learned only too late, indicated his character very well. In fact, a man who for fifteen years allows his legitimate wife to languish in misery in Bath, re-



moves from his home a son whose mother selects death as a blessing which would rob her of the infamy of his father, who overwhelms his daughter with the most inhuman treatment, before whom he gives himself over to a licentious life; this man, of whom I offer only an inadequate sketch, does he merit the least consideration and the credit which you accord his calumniatory accounts, which you call official information! . . .

"I arrive at the accusation of the kidnapping, by which one is made to believe a little love affair is the reason which decided Miss Watson to join me at Boulogne.

"Recognizing in the young person a great disposition for music, of which her father was incapable of taking advantage, I proposed to him to take her as pupil and assured him that after three years of study, she would be able to secure herself an independent living and the means of being useful to her family, especially to the unfortunate mother. My proposition, now rejected, now accepted with great demonstrations of gratitude, remained finally without result; I left England, renewing to Mr. Watson my offers of service to his daughter.

"Miss Watson, aged eighteen and not sixteen, had already commenced the career of the theater, where she might attain some success, but for the selfishness of her father. Sacrificing her future to the present, it fitted in better with his plans to have her at home, where the most humiliating treatment repaid her for her help in the concerts, where the most arduous work in the household put her in a worse position than the lowest of the servants, obliged as she was to obey all the wishes of Miss Wells, her father's mistress.



"Tired finally of so many insults, of so much scandal, it was to escape it that she ran away and, remembering my offer, came of her own will asking protection from one whose advice and kindness made her hope for a better future. I therefore did not kidnap Miss Watson, as her father has intimated. If I had had this evil intention, nothing would have been easier, because while Watson was in prison—whence my liberality allowed him to be released—his daughter was free and alone, Miss Wells leaving the house every night to go and join the prisoner.

"But I have the courage to admit Miss Watson was sure to find in me the protector which she sought, and the assistance which the author of her days refused her. In that, Monsieur, I obey an impulse of *bienfaisance*, of generosity which merits, instead of blame and cowardly accusation, the praise of honest souls only capable of appreciating a good deed. To those who see in this debauchery and shameful sentiments, pity and contempt. . . .

"Now, sir, after this exposé, do you conscientiously think that a young person, maltreated by her father and by a stranger (feminine, *étrangère*), who has no claim upon her, need always support the weight of an existence so humiliating? Is Miss Watson not to be excused for having removed herself from a residence of confusion and of deprivation? . . . And do you not see that in his coming here without modesty in company with his accomplice, Miss Wells, to take back his daughter, Miss Watson, he again cynically insulted public morals under the guise of asserting his rights as a father. . . .

"To finish, sir, with this unfortunate affair, I proclaim

in a loud voice that my conduct has been above reproach, my views honest and disinterested, conforming to the ideas of morals and religion which prescribe help and protection to the oppressed. Also, not a single thought troubles my conscience in all that has passed with regard to this young person, worthy of another destiny than that to which she is obliged to submit. I feel myself, moreover, strong enough to remain above everything which wickedness, bad faith and slander might again attempt against a man, in whom a little glory and cowardly persecutions seem to rival each other without ever abating their force.

"Accept, etc.

"NICOLÒ PAGANINI."

From the response:—

"We shall answer Mr. Paganini that despite his ability to defend himself it is, nevertheless, true that a young person (feminine) of sixteen or eighteen years, it doesn't matter which, had consented to follow him and had left the house of her father at *his instigation*. In any country of the world this act, however motivated it is, will always bring censure from honest people, even if he who is its author conceived it in virtue and kindness, especially when the latter does not offer by his social position such guarantee of religious probity that the suspicion of moral confusion might not even be suspected in him. (It would not be right even if he were above reproach.) This is absolutely necessary in order that *the protection* given might not develop in such a way as to be a dishonor to the protégée.

"Let us admit that Mr. Watson has done all with which Mr. Paganini reproaches him, that he be even more immoral, if that were possible. It is no reason for Mr. Paganini, a stranger, to take the right upon himself to thus imprudently interpose himself between the father and the daughter, for a person of sixteen or eighteen years is always more in her place in the home of her father, even in the midst of a life of debauchery, than at the home of an unmarried stranger, artist and traveler. In the former case she attracts compassion to herself, in the latter, blame. . . . This is severe, but it is so. And even if Mr. Paganini tells the truth, which nothing seems to prove, it still remains that Miss Watson has a mother, that this mother lives separated from her; it seems to us that it was rather to her that the young lady should have turned in life, to console her in her misery.

"Now why does Mr. Paganini allow us to assume that Miss Watson might not have left London at his instigation when so many witnesses saw his agent, named Urbani, go to seek her at the boat and reclaim her at the debarkment with the most enthusiastic insistence.

"It seems to us, by way of conclusion, that all this well resembles an abduction with consent (*enlèvement consenti*) and as for Mr. Paganini, would it not have been better for him to keep silent than to try so unfortunate a justification? . . . We allow the public to judge for itself and we shall see if it will judge in favor of the great artist, whose name we should have preferred not to see involved in this affair so little worthy of his talent and his renown. . . ."

*"July 10th, 1834.*

*"Monsieur the Editor of the "Annotateur," Boulogne-sur-Mer, Hotel d'Angleterre.*

"Sir: The note which follows my letter in your last number necessitates an answer. You establish the fact that my assertions against Mr. Watson are false and you blame me for having lightly affirmed that Miss Wells accompanied him to Boulogne, whereas, according to you, *he came officially absolutely alone.*

"Your official information is not fortunate, sir, because it is *positive that Miss Wells came to Boulogne with Watson.* I saw her myself leave the boat: she wore a hat of yellow straw and a green coat which I knew perfectly. There remains now for you only to contradict this fact, to which other eyes than my own certainly were witness.

"My other assertions, believe me, are also well founded, and moreover, it is for Mr. Watson and not for you to contradict if he has reason to do so. The public will judge the value of your denial with regard to Miss Watson; and it will know how to appreciate the sentiments of generosity which you so charitably bear me after having torn me to pieces and moralized for two long pages. Your gentleness wishes well to regret that a noble character might not find itself allied to a great talent and that I do not take my pen to refute all the calumnies spread with profusion against me; disdain, Sir, is also a good defense, and more than one honest man has used it as I have against a turbulent and fanatic mob.

"And now that the newspapers of London and of Paris are prattling also about this affair, speaking of the repentance

of Miss Watson for her giddiness and her imprudent act, adding that she came to me because I was to marry her in Paris and to give her a rich dowry and gems! . . . Her action was, therefore, voluntary but interested. It is for the public to draw its conclusions. As for myself, I have said my last word about all these annoyances; you are at liberty, you who dispose more easily of the columns of your newspapers than of public opinion, to fill them in a manner as edifying as you have done in preaching with so much eloquence and wisdom in favor of morality and virtue. There is between the two of us one difference: It is that I have the courage to sign my letter—that courage you lack.

"I have the honor to salute you,

"NICOLÒ PAGANINI."

The only benefit the poor girl received from her romantic episode was when, in a subsequent tour to America, she achieved publicity by the coupling of her name with that of the violinist. It is said that at that time Paganini sent a special messenger to America to re-open negotiations for marriage, but Miss Watson refused his proposal and later married an American. This is probably the source of the rumor that Paganini visited America.

While at Boulogne defending his reputation, Paganini started negotiations with another young lady, a musically talented little girl whom he wanted to adopt as companion for Achille. He made arrangements for a meeting with the parents and for a document relinquishing all parental rights, so that he would not later be accused of kidnaping. The idea, however, was abandoned.

### PART THREE—LAST YEARS





## XLII

### THE VILLA GAIONA

AFTER six years of polemical triumph Nicolo Paganini came home in a coach with a sky-blue tufted satin lining. It had been made to order in London. Beside him bounced Achille, a handsome boy of eight. His luggage was augmented by medals, wreaths, snuff boxes, love letters, bank books, clippings, jewels, medicine bottles. His person was diminished by several pounds, most of his teeth and some hair on the temples. His nose seemed to have grown longer, and the black eyes which usually saw nothing on the road darted from side to side looking for landmarks to point out to the child. As they approached Barbarossa's wall, his whisper grew husky, then failed him entirely and he was reduced to gesticulations.

*"Genova la superba!"* The streets seemed narrower than he had pictured them, and crowded with people who all looked familiar. But there were new shops, new cafés and arcades. In the Piazza di Ferrari was the Carlo Felice Opera, its classic simplicity a strange contrast to the baroque city.

The September sunshine was warm and the breeze restrained, and how soothing was the Genovese tongue to an ear weary of French accented with malice and English harsh with ridicule.

Paganini was proud of Genoa, and Genoa of Paganini.

The Municipal Officials presented him with a large gold medal and made speeches. The Marchese Giancarlo di Negro gave a banquet to unveil a marble bust of the family protégé.

Many of the old friends were dead, but there were plenty of new ones to take their places. Achille was passed from lap to lap and his stomach spoiled with sweets. Teresa Paganini should have been there.

There were a few, however, who resented the adulation of a friend of Metternich. Signorina Mazzini wrote to her brother:—

"I cannot understand why a player deserves a statue while he is still alive. What on earth has he done for the benefit of humanity?"

The Genovese patriot paused in the work of his organization of "Young Europe" to reprimand his sister. "Certainly Italy is the greatest among nations since Paganini plays the violin well. Foolish are they who are not content with this and look for other things."

Paganini was weary of hotel rooms. For thirty years he had wrapped his medicine bottles in chemises, and stuffed soiled handkerchiefs into his shoes. He longed to spread out. His beautiful snuff boxes and medals had been merely things to pack and unpack. He did not, like Liszt, wish to create a Mecca for musical pilgrims. He just wanted to wear his house slippers in peace, to sort his music at leisure. He wanted a home for Achille, a place to display his medallion of the Duke of Reichstadt, his gold snuff box with the diamond monogram of Louis Philippe, his cross of the *Comendatore*, his portraits, busts, wreaths and ribbons; a place to store his sword, his bamboo cane, his outmoded shoe



### PARIS MEDAL, 1831

He was avid for medals and decorations; used reproductions of them for the interior decoration of his villa



### PAGANINI'S COACH

Now exposed to the elements in a shed at the Villa Gaiona



### CALLING CARD

Raspberry color with an embossed edge.  
(Courtesy of Arthur Hartmann.)



buckles, his little Amati, a place where he could have his Gaspare di Salo, his Rugerius cello, the guitar of his youth and the seven Stradevarii at hand.

He toured the country in search of property and soon found exactly what he wanted in the Villa Gaiona, a spacious, three-story, white house which doubled itself in the waters of the lake at its feet. The murmur of the wind through cypress trees and the swish of a waterfall imitated for Paganini the sounds of his own violin. His only neighbor was an abandoned church of the thirteenth century with its tall Gothic-Lombard spires.

The property was about six kilometers from Parma and protected by the beautiful hills of the Parmense. Without delay Paganini installed himself in his first home. He always referred to the time spent there as his "*ore beate*." The Villa Gaiona was a simple house, whose stone floors and white walls trapped the chill of the Tuscan hills. The rooms were large and the ceilings high. The beautiful stone staircase rising from the central hall was surmounted by the Varni bust in Carrara marble, and arched by a ceiling in which Paganini had imbedded enlarged reproductions of his medals. In one corner was a little red room in which he occasionally played. Throughout reigned the systematic disorder of the artist. One cannot imagine a more fitting spot for peace and musical composition. Paganini was granted neither.

During his stay in London Monsieur Troupenas had come from Paris to see Paganini for the purpose of buying the copyright to his music. Although prepared to pay the highest price he had ever paid, he could not come to terms with the violinist. The sum demanded was so large that a continuous



sale for ten years would not have reimbursed him. Paganini contemplated publishing the music himself, but as he had not retired from the concert field, he wished to transpose the violin music into piano music so as not to let other violinists steal his thunder, lightning and cock-crowing during his life time. He planned occupying his time at the Villa with this work. He also contemplated the founding of a conservatory for violin whose system of pedagogy would be founded on his secret.

In November he was induced to give a charity concert at Piacenza and on the 12th of December he played at the celebration of the birthday of Maria Luisa, who was then Duchess of Parma. She nominated him member of the "*Commissione amministrativa di Teatro Ducale*," with the task of re-organizing the orchestra.

"Everything that Paganini proposes shall be adopted," said the Duchess, and as substantial proof of her favor she presented him with a valuable ring and a diploma of Cavaliere of the Order of St. George. This did not escape the *Revue Musicale* in Paris.

"We cannot see without regret this king of artists descend to the level of a courtier."

In 1835 the cholera raged. The death of Dr. Paganini, Nicolo's brother, gave rise to the report that the violinist had died. Obituary notices appeared in all the papers.

Paganini spent the year 1835 residing alternately at Genoa, his beloved Milan, and the Villa Gaiona. During this year the sources of information are slight and entries in the "Red Book" are missing. There is, however, another red book, not so famous.



THE VILLA GAIONA  
Now occupied by Paganini's descendants.



It is about two inches by three, dated in French, three days to a page. In this book Paganini, for one year without missing a single day, kept a faithful record of the most intimate kind. Occasionally there appears the name of a hotel with a derogatory comment. Most of the entries, however, are single words:—

*Mai 1 Purgativo*

*Mai 2 Riposo*

*Mai 3 Purgativo*

*Mai 4 Riposo*

*Mai 5 Vomitivo*

*Mai 6 Figlio Prezzo*

*Mai 7 Purgativo*

*Mai 8 Figlio purga.*

*Mai 9 Vomi-Purga.*

We learn from this book that on June 4th Paganini took a spoon and a half of purgative, third grade, and that on Wednesday, September 9th, he was at Milan and vomited.

## XLIII

### THE CASINO PAGANINI

**I**F Paganini had carried out his intention of remaining in the Villa Gaiona editing his works, violin literature and the Paganini estate would be richer. He interrupted his few years of rest with short trips to receive honors, to give concerts, to try to recapture old enthusiasms. He was made Honorary Member of the St. Cecilia Society of Rome, gave concerts at Nice and Marseilles, and a charity concert in Turin on June 9th, 1837. He did not know that this was to be his last public appearance.

In July he returned to Paris, an old man of fifty-six, whose virtuosity was no longer on trial, but who was still squabbling with the world. Sir Charles Hallé, then a boy of nineteen, describes the shrunken figure of Paganini, which was to be seen nearly every afternoon in the music shop of Bernard Latte in the *Passage de l'Opéra*, where he sat for hours enveloped in a long black cloak, scarcely ever raising his eyes. Beethoven in his last years sat alone in his silence, Schubert drank to his own approaching starvation, and Schumann watched furtively the approach of madness. But they each had friends. Paganini knew many people. He was flattered by women and honored by men, but he was always fundamentally alone. The only creature he loved was too

young to understand him. Suspicious, diseased, perpetually on the defensive, the world divided itself into those who wished to injure him and those who begged favors.

Young Hallé invited him to his room. The medium of words did not exist between them. Paganini would wave his hand toward the piano and Hallé would timidly play.

"Paganini sat there, taciturn, rigid, hardly ever moving a muscle of his face, and I sat spell-bound, a shudder running through me whenever his uncanny eyes fell upon me."

Hallé never aroused enough courage to ask the violinist to play for him. One day, after a long silence, Paganini rose, took the violin out of its case, and began to tune it. As usual, he carefully returned it to the case without playing a note.

Added to his ailments at this time was the suffering, almost physical, that Paganini endured when his Guarnerius had to undergo repairs by Vuillaume. He was as miserable as he had been one time when a servant had left it at an inn.

Everything he touched turned into a controversy. On his way from Parma to Paris he had stopped at the home of a young pianist, Douglas Loveday, of whose hospitality he took advantage for several months. Here he met a doctor, a friend of the host, and it was natural that his ailments should supply much of the dinner-table conversation. Just before leaving, the doctor presented Paganini with a bill for one hundred and ten francs. Paganini was reluctant to pay and only did so on the insistence of his host. He claimed that Loveday had forced the physician upon him merely to enable his friend to earn some money. He maintained, also, that the doctor's advice was worthless and that under cover of the conversation he had approached him and forced him



to delineate his symptoms, later construing this as medical consultation.

Paganini established himself at a popular *Néothermes* on the rue de la Victoire and, while taking the cure, thought of a way to avenge himself on Mr. Loveday.

*"Paris, June 16th, 1838.*

"Sir: I find it necessary to express my surprise at how poor your memory is with respect to settling your debts to me. This sin of neglect forces me to awaken in your memory things that you hardly dare forget. I send, therefore, my small demand and beg you to settle it as soon as possible:

"For 12 lessons I gave your daughter in order  
to make clear to her musical expression and the  
worth of the notes which she played in my presence    2,400 Frcs.

"For 8 personal recitals that I gave at differ-  
ent times in your home ..... 24,000 Frcs.  
Total ..... 26,400 Frcs.

"I do not mention in my bill the many oral lessons I gave your daughter at the table whereby I paid everything on my part to the last cent. I make her a present of all the pains I took in these instances to give her a true conception of musical art, in the hope that she would grasp it and learn from it. I will not even mention that it is only just to compensate people for their services, in so much more as you, only a very short time ago, expressed your own opinion on this matter and so obliged me to pay a hundred and ten francs for advice which was, luckily for my health, only occasional. Surely you feel, sir, that there is too great a

difference between the so-called doctor's visits and my lessons, even more—my recitals, not to realize that I am by far more modest in my demands than the doctor was in his.

"I beg you to settle this debt to me and add, for safety's sake, that I shall not hesitate to follow the example that others have set me in the conviction that I have at least the same right. I send my respectful regards and have the honor

"To remain,

"NICOLÒ PAGANINI."

Loveday answered this by a bill for his hospitality and for piano lessons which his daughter had given Achille to the extent of 37,800 francs. This not only disbursed his account, but made Paganini his debtor by 11,400 francs. The details of this controversy were not kept hidden from the press.

The unkindest cut of all was the affair of the *Casino Paganini*. Two speculators, Tardif de Petitville and Rousseau-Desmelotries, planned an enterprise which was to make the fortunes of all concerned. A magnificent property on the Chaussée D'Antin was purchased from the Duke of Padua. On the spacious grounds, extending the entire length on the rue Meyerbeer almost to the rue Mathurins, a pavilion was erected known as the *Casino Paganini*. Paganini, who counted each sou, invested about a hundred thousand francs in that commonest of delusions, the hope of a hundred per cent return. The government refused to license the place as a gambling house and the management was compelled to rely upon concert receipts alone. Paganini signed a contract to play at these concerts, but the wretched state of his health

prevented him from doing so. Berlioz wrote in the *Chronique de Paris*:—

“The part which the famous violinist will personally take in the musical program is to walk about the grounds three times a day, if the weather is fine.”

The matter dragged on for some time and when the Casino failed, the directors brought an action against Paganini for breach of contract, and a judgment was rendered to the amount of twenty thousand francs. This decision was equally unsatisfactory to both parties and the case was appealed. Legal procedure dragged and Paganini, impatient, ill, cheated by lawyers, had to mark feeble time. His confidant was still the faithful Germin:—

“*Paris, March 8th, 1838.*

“The Society of the Casino, composed of burglars and assassins, is nearly bankrupt. The sixty thousand francs of the . . . shares are lost. The sorrow I feel this moment is so great that I would rather not speak of it. The newspapers will speak of it in due course.”

And on March 28th:—

“. . . with reference to the work of those infamous robbers of the *Société du Casino*, I have had to discharge a lawyer who, pretending to defend me, was looking after his own interest and was in league with the aforesaid robbers. I hope, however (as I have been advised in time by another lawyer), to obtain satisfaction, and who knows, I also hope to make more than one of them go to jail.”

At the second hearing the case came before the *Cour Royal*. Paganini's council, Monsieur Chaix-d'Est-Ange, described



### THE PAGANINI CASINO AT PARIS

Paganini was induced to invest in it and lost a fortune when it failed. The litigation involved him almost to the end of his life.





the prayers and entreaties of the proprietors of this "catch-penny establishment to induce the grand maestro to lend his mighty arm and name to their speculation." Paganini had reluctantly permitted himself to be persuaded, giving his written promise that he would play exclusively at their concerts. Ill health, however, against which no man is invulnerable, prevented his fulfilling his engagement and now the gentlemen were taking advantage of his misfortune and demanding actual cash reimbursement. Monsieur Barillon, on behalf of the proprietors, declared that Paganini's failure to appear had ruined their speculation and that damages should be given in proportion to his drawing power. They further stated that they were ruined, having invested all their funds. They had installed Paganini in a splendid suite of apartments at the Casino, one boudoir being lined with flannel expressly for him. They further deposed, claimed, stated and represented that when he was complaining most of his wretched health, he had accepted a dinner offered him by the musicians of the orchestra and had given toasts in both French and Italian. Furthermore, he had permitted bills to be printed, announcing his concert, and hundreds of tickets to be sold at twenty francs each. It would be useless, they maintained, "to describe the genuflections, prayers, entreaties—all in vain. Paganini fiddled away in his own room with closed doors but positively adhered to his obstinate resolution not to play in concert." The proprietors, therefore, faced ruin, owing to his obstinacy, and the court had awarded them only twenty thousand francs!

During this litigation Paganini attended a brilliant function at the Salle Erard, at which were present Meyerbeer,



Auber, De Beriot, Donizetti and other musicians. December witnessed the first performance of *Harold* and it was then that Paganini knelt before Berlioz.

The court reversed the former decision and condemned Paganini to pay fifty thousand francs damages with an alternative of ten years' imprisonment.

There were further results of this suit. De Petitville and an ex-insurance agent, Fleury, were fined three hundred francs each for attempting to bribe a secretary general of the police department with shares of stock in the Casino. There was a litigation between Petitville and Rousseau-Desmelotries. A certain Fumigali seized and sold the furniture and various workmen put in claims amounting to two hundred thousand francs for wages.

Paganini became a perpetual defendant, and the Paganini case became *l'Affaire*. Bribery was not all; there was an elaborate frame-up which threatened to give Paganini another opportunity to practice on his G string. He only indicates it to Germin:—

"I had to postpone leaving Paris owing to the calumny of a rascal, a business man who assured the *Procuratore del Re* that I wanted to kill him in my house with the help of four men with mustaches and armed. The examination of several witnesses took nearly two months and it was not advisable for me to leave. Finally the imposition of the rascal was recognized."

Wearied, bitter, speechless in both senses of the word and poorer by a few hundred thousand francs, Paganini climbed into his coach and rattled south, death gaining ground on the road.

## XLIV

### FINALE

AT Marseilles he rested at the home of a friend, Monsieur Brun, a notary and musical amateur, devoting himself to his early love, the guitar. He occasionally took part in his favorite Beethoven Quartet and it is said that he favored the *Sixth Quartet* of Mozart. Once he was well enough to attend Cherubini's *Requiem*. And on a June evening, when the air was mild, he attended a performance of the *Missa Solemnis* at one of the churches.

Monsieur Lèa, an old friend of Genoa, occupied the next room to Paganini. Ernst, according to his custom, had followed Paganini to Marseilles and had prevailed upon Monsieur Lèa to let him occupy his room. After waiting in the jack-knife position hour after hour, he at last saw the master taking out his violin. Then occurred a series of raucous groans. As the instrument was out of keyhole reach, Ernst used his musical knowledge to reconstruct what was happening. Paganini was trying to obtain on the open G string a sound lower than that produced by the natural bowing—a G flat. He attempted this by pressing very hard on the string. This occupation consumed much of his time, but Ernst got nothing for his pain in the back.

There was a still more athletic enthusiast. When he retired to his room for the evening, Paganini was disturbed by

a rustling in the chimney. Thinking a bird or a cat had taken possession of it, he kindly ordered a fire to be lighted. After a few smoky moments, he saw something black emerge from the chimney about the size of a human being. With many apologies this besooted object explained that he was a musician by the name of Abarti, whose reverence for Paganini and desire to learn his secret had caused him to take this extraordinary position.

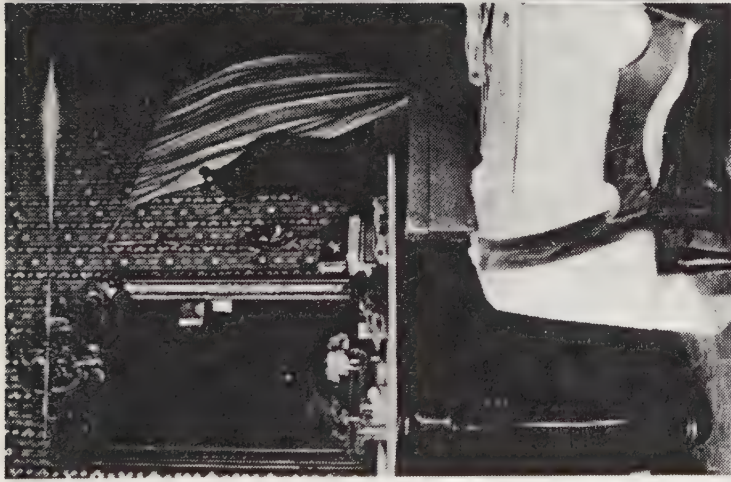
In July the baths at Balaruc, and in August sulphur baths at Vernet.

"Paganini is nothing but a shadow," wrote his doctor, Lallemande, "he is so emaciated; he has lost his voice and only his glowing eyes and angular gestures speak for him. His violin, which led him to fame and glory, was taken from the carriage with him. The patient is to take the baths in the Elisa Spring at twenty-two degrees of heat."

Someone suggested his native climate and the painful trip was made to Genoa, culminating in a violent nervous attack. As winter approached Paganini sought respite from pursuing oblivion in the over-rated climate of Nice, then Italian. He occupied a small room in the second floor of a house owned by the Marquis de Chateauneuf on the rue de la Préfecture, with a view of the sea.

"If heaven allows it," he wrote to Berlioz, "I shall see you again in the spring."

And to his sister: "I feel myself more ailing here but, despite that, I have decided to stay for the present. Later I wish to go to Tuscany, there to await my last hour under the azure sky, and gladly will I die, if I may first breathe the air of Dante and Petrarch."



THE ROOM IN WHICH PAGANINI  
DIED

As it appears today. The house, once the property of the Marquis of Chateaufeuf, is now a lodging house.



HOUSE AT NICE IN WHICH  
PAGANINI DIED

The inscription reads: "His Magic Notes Still Vibrate in the Soft Breeze of Nice."



He devoted some time each day to composition, using the guitar to help him. What memories did its strings evoke? A young boy who lived opposite in the rue Reparata recalled that Paganini occasionally took walks with friends to the beach.

"Sometimes I went with them. This miser of a Paganini would take me by the hand and conduct me to Muller, the neighborhood *confiseur*. After having bought me a gift of bon bons and *friandises*, he would take me back to the house, not without having embraced me with a quite paternal affection."

And yet he refused the services of a doctor because of the expense and when he found his medicine costly took only half the quantity. He discharged a servant who had done him an injury but when he learned that according to law he would have to pay the servant's fare back to France, he reconsidered and kept him.

His friend, Count Eugène de Cessole, visited him daily and received instruction on the violin. Sometimes Paganini would play a passage for his pupil, resting one elbow on a piece of furniture. He insisted, above all, on "*justesse*." "*Justesse*," he said, "is a needle point to which executants approach in a more or less degree."

There were days in which he did not suffer. He spoke in a rapid whisper of future trips to Russia and America. He exhibited with pleasure a letter from a promoter, announcing that he was going to construct in America a hall holding ten thousand persons and given over to nothing but concerts. One day the neighbors heard issuing from his room the sounds of a violin quarrel between a dog and a cat. One of



them, the owner of the cat, insisted on breaking into the room. When they did so, they found a cat and the maestro sheepishly trying to hide his violin behind him.

He surrounded himself with stringed instruments of all kinds. He suggested that Cessole order the duets of Viotti that they might play them together.

Sivori wanted a good violin. His father wrote to Paganini, asking if he could purchase one of his.

"I will not sell you the violin, but shall present it to you in compliment of your high talents."

Sivori came to Nice for the violin. Paganini asked to have his pupil play for him, but from the next room, as he could not bear the direct impact of the vibrations.

When he had finished, Paganini whispered incoherently, "You will be the only survivor of my style. Go to Paris. Study there—there all great artists beget their reputations. Go to Paris. After Paris there is nothing."

His strength diminished with the winter winds and he was unable to leave his room. His feeble voice, balked by a tubercular larynx, sought a detour through the passage of his nose; in order to force it out through the proper channel, Paganini would pinch his nostrils as he spoke. Then Achille would place his practiced ear to the old man's lips and patiently translate the squeaky sounds into intelligible words. When Achille was not there, he made his wants known by writing notes.

The curé of St. Reparata, Father Pierre Paul Caffarelli, came to administer the Sacrament.

"Well now, Signor Paganini, it is with me that you must render your account."

Voltaire, under similar circumstances, had said to the priest, "Remember, I am still spitting blood; we must be careful not to mix God's blood with my own."

Paganini, unable to speak, showed the curé the door.

On a May evening, as the twilight lingered on the blue shore, Paganini sat at his window watching the gay specks that were lovers and gamblers, children and beggars from every country in the world. The soft breath of mimosa and of lemon blossoms was in the air and the breeze that came in the window whispered of the sadness of youth. Suddenly a ray from the setting sun illumined the portrait of Lord Byron which hung on the wall. Paganini, thinking of his friend, reached for his violin. One by one the occupants of the house crept in to listen, and the servants sat on the stone stairs. He played what was perhaps a portrayal of Byron's stormy and romantic career, the accents of irony, of despair, and his passionate struggle for liberty. According to the Count de Cessole, this was the greatest music that Paganini had ever played.

He rested a moment. They waited, trembling, for the coda: the bow dropped to the floor. Paganini was dead.

## XLV

### WILL

**A**LTHOUGH Paganini had cringed in the shadow of death from childhood, it was not until 1837 that he had made out his will. His beloved Achille was his "universale" heir with the obligation "to conserve the estate in Parma called Villa Gaiona and to give said estate to his sons and descendants of a masculine line, the right descending to the first born."

The legacy to his son amounted to about two million lira and the title of Baron. He left the income of fifty thousand lira to one sister and of seventy-five thousand to the other; an annuity of twelve hundred to Antonia Bianchi and one of sixty-two hundred to "a lady living at Lucca." This was a magnificent fortune for a time when money had many times its present purchasing power. He bequeathed his Guarnerius to the city of Genoa to be "perpetually conserved." It was eleven years before this bequest was carried out. There was a lengthy correspondence between the Baron Achille and successive mayors of Genoa. In 1851 Achille suggested that the city of Genoa accept instead the marble bust by Varni to perpetuate his father's memory. This proposition was refused and the Baron Achille at last yielded up the violin and several years later, the bow. It is now under glass in the

*Municipio* at Genoa flanked with medals, ribbons, photographs. Sivori's violin lies horizontal at its feet. It has only been played a few times and is deteriorating from want of use.

"I do not mention in this will my old friend, Avvocato Luigi Geremi, as he has so wished. I, however, recommend my son to follow his advice."

There was little more. "I forbid any pomp at my funeral. I do not wish artists to execute a requiem for me." His fears were groundless. There was not a spot in Italy that found itself degraded enough to receive Paganini's ashes.

## XLVI

### *MARCHE FUNEBRE*

PAGANINI'S posthumous tours were among his most bizarre.

The Church refused to permit his body to be laid in consecrated ground. The news of his death spread quickly in the little town and scandalous scenes occurred before the house of the damned. Curiosity seekers went in to see the unshriven corpse, first crossing themselves. He lay on a platform, his eyes glassy. A white cotton night cap held in place with a blue ribbon, and an enormous white cravat failed to conceal the bandage which held his jaw closed. After several days it was considered expedient to put him in a coffin with a glass pane over the face. The clergy, resenting this triumph of the body, demanded that it be removed. An ancient ruling was invoked and the defunct was placed in the waiting room of the Lazaretto of Villefranche, like a pestiferous thing. There, in the curve of the beautiful Mediterranean harbor, Paganini lay for over a month, denying himself to no visitor, while church and friends wrestled over his disposition.

A dealer in second-hand objects offered the Count de Cessole thirty thousand francs for the corpse that he might become rich by exhibiting it in England.

The Lazaretto, or pest-house, was a small building con-

structed against a perpendicular rock. Olive trees drooped gently over, trying in vain to conceal its horror. Here, in the *salle des pas perdus*, the body awaited judgment.

The tempest whistled and the beacon light of Villefranche rolled its luminous eye intermittently upon him. Above the wail of the wind, fishermen, whose ears are attuned to such things, heard cries and lamentations and blood-curdling notes on the E string as they sat mending their nets on the beach. Visitors saw little devils executing a *danse macabre* around the coffin. The *Nicoises* began to get uncomfortable, especially when there mingled with these phenomena the less tenuous stench of decomposition. Both sides agreed that something had to be done.

Hastily, furtively, incompletely, the body was buried by the side of a fetid rivulet formed by the refuse from a neighboring olive-oil factory. The Count de Cessole, finding this last indignity more than he could bear, decided to bury the remains of his friend himself. He told his project to four friends, Count Urban Garin de Cocconato, Count de Pierlas, Alexis de Saint-March, a young sculptor, and Felix Ziem, the artist.

The friends held a surreptitious conference and the night following met like ghouls at the grave. In the flickering light of torches they raised the coffin. It was carried in a litter by strong peasants who feared their burden. The night was starless and de Cessole led the procession with his upraised torch. The funeral march was the beat of angry waves which licked the feet of the pallbearers and splashed over the coffin. Slowly and with difficulty they made their way to the end of the peninsula of St. Jean-Cap-Ferrat until they reached



the property of de Pierlas on the extremity of Cap Saint-Hospice. It was here, at the foot of the Saracen round tower, with its militant virgin, that the next tomb of Paganini was made. The coffin was placed upon a rock near the edge of the sea. A marble slab inscribed simply with the name was set above it. Paganini remained there for several years.

*La chanoine* Dominique Gualco, *vicaire general* of the archbishop of Genoa, had confirmed the decision of the archbishop of Nice. He "did not wish to put his neighbor and friend of Nice in the wrong." Recourse was had to the supreme tribunal, the Pope. The sovereign pontiff turned the matter over to a joint commission of three, the Bishop of Turin and two Canons of the Cathedral of Genoa. These gentlemen were instructed to make careful investigation of the Catholicity of the deceased. It was found, after careful inquiry, that he had not been a good Catholic. The report, however, was never published and it is today buried in the archives of the Vatican.

"He had licentious morals," said the curé; "when I saw him in his salon, I saw with my own eyes a picture of Leda and the Swan, an abominable image, even the memory of which makes me shudder."

"If you had looked further," said the Count, "you would have perceived a Virgin by Raphael and a repentant Magdalene. Moreover, all these engravings belonged to the proprietor, for Paganini occupied a furnished room."

"He was a gambler."

"He belonged to the Brotherhood of White Penitents of Genoa."

"He never went to church."



#### PAGANINI'S TOMB AT PARMA

The final resting place of Paganini. After thirty-six years the Church permitted the body to be interred in sacred ground.



#### THE VIRGIN OF ST. HOSPICE

One of the halting places of Paganini's body in its odyssey to its Parma tomb.



"He refused to marry an English girl because she was Protestant."

"He did not give his son a religious education."

"He tried to have him admitted to the Jesuit school, but there was no room."

"He was an Atheist."

"He was a good Catholic."

If the commission who investigated into his Atheism had taken the trouble to examine his will, they would have seen:—

"There should be celebrated for me one hundred masses by the R. R. P. R. Cappucini. I recommend my soul to the immense benevolence of the Creator."

But then it was only two hundred years since an incumbent of the Bishopric of Nice had drawn up a complaint against the caterpillars of Contes and threatened them with excommunication!



The Baron Achille, grown up, decided to take his father's remains back to Genoa. On a starry evening in August Paganini resumed his posthumous odyssey and embarked on the Maria Madalena which set sail for Genoa, along the coast, past Bordighera, San Remo and Savone.

When a customs officer demanded threateningly, "What have you there?" Captain Rasteu replied, "We are carrying Paganini; Paganini *aqueou que sounaba tan ben*—he who sounded so well."

The gentlemen of the customs opened the coffin and felt the body for themselves. After many adventures, the vessel

reached Ligurian waters, but not, alas, to find harbor. The Maria Madalena had sailed from Marseilles, where the cholera raged, and the authorities of Genoa would not permit it to land. The little ship turned around and skirted along the coast, seeking a place to deposit its gruesome burden. After many attempted landings the boat docked at the Lèrins Islands, off the shore of Cannes. There, on the Islet of Saint Ferreol, the relics of Paganini received their third interment. De Maupassant describes Saint Ferreol as "a bare red rock, bristling like a porcupine. So seamed is it with pointed teeth and fangs that it is scarcely possible to walk on it; you must set your feet in the hollows between its tusks, and advance with caution."

On this desolate spot a hole is still pointed out as "Paganini's ditch." The dead man had friends at Court and some years later, in 1844, Maria Luisa ordered that the body be brought to Parma. It received another temporary burial at the Villa Plevra, a Paganini property, and then was interred on the grounds of the Villa Gaiona. Here in his own home he found rest until 1853, when, for hygienic reasons, the body had to be exhumed and a fresh process of embalming employed.

Baron Achille continued his fight against clerical opposition and at last in 1876, thirty-six years after his demise, the papal court authorized the removal of the remains of Nicolo Paganini to the church of the Madonna della Steccata at Parma, a church especially patronized by the Order of St. George. The transfer of the body took place at night, and the banks of the Baganza, along which the procession passed, were dotted with the curious whose eager faces flashed forth

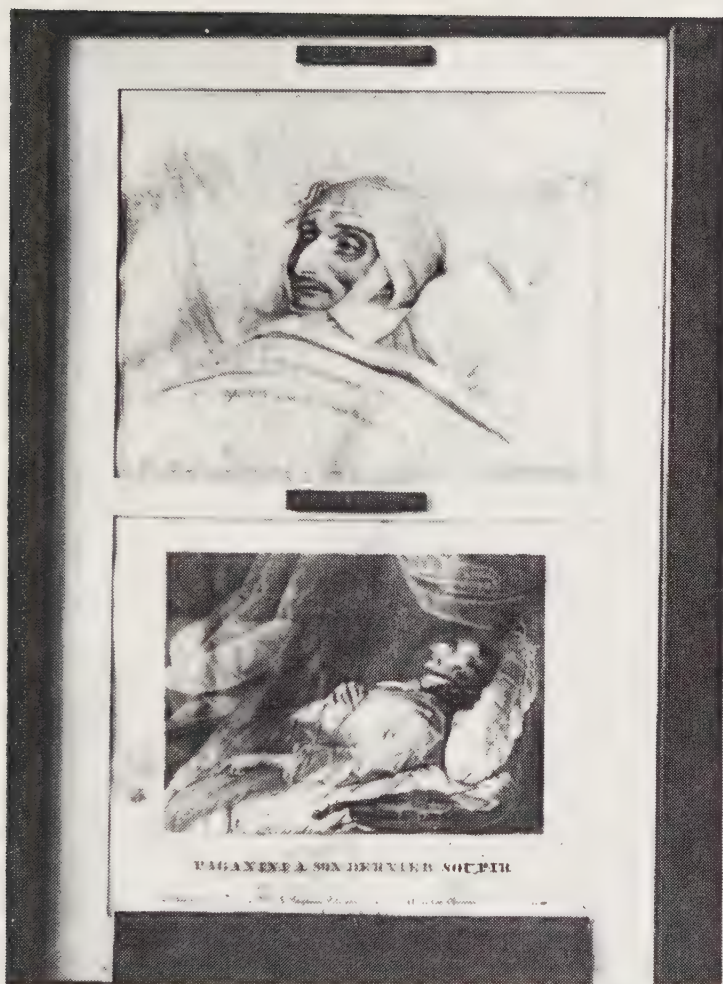
one by one in the light of the torches. The services were conducted by the Baron Attila, a nephew of Nicolo, and a belated requiem was held. This is, up to the present, Nicolo Paganini's last resting place, though he has not been allowed to rest in it undisturbed. In 1893 a violinist of Prague, Ondriczek, was visiting the old Baron Achille at Parma and upon his solicitations the coffin was opened and a few friends permitted to look in. Three years later another exhumation took place, occasioned by "urgent necessity." At this time, according to a Genovese journalist who was present, the identity of the corpse was undeniable. "The features were still well preserved. The black coat was in tatters but its cut was still discernible. The lower part of the body was nothing but a heap of bones, but the face still preserved its unique character." The body was placed in a fresh coffin. It is surmounted by a dignified statue and there have been no complaints of smells or ghostly music from the Parmesans, though they do not point to it with the pride with which they designate the magnificent tomb of Verdi.

Paganini had written to Fétis in the Paris letter:—

"One hope still remains to me: it is that after my death the calumny will have spent itself, and that those who have avenged themselves so cruelly for my success will let my ashes repose in peace."







# DEATHBED PORTRAITS OF PAGANINI

*Above:* After Paganini's death at Nice a nightcap was placed on his head and a bandage held up his jaw. His body was placed on a dais for exhibition.

*Below:* Lith. by Mereu after a drawing by his son, Achille.  
*(Museo Massimo, Nice.)*



## APPENDICES



APPENDIX "A"

(A Few of the Verses Inspired by Paganini)

THE WONDERFUL PAGANINI

OR

LONDON FIDDLING MAD

A New Comic Song

The Poetry by

W. R. Moncrieff, Esq., Re

The Melody by

One of the First Composers of the Day

Boston

Published by John Ashton

197 Washington St.

\* \* \* \* \*

THE WONDERFUL PAGANINI

or

LONDON FIDDLING MAD

—I—

What a hubbub! what a fuss! all London sure are frantic, Sirs.

The Prince of Fiddlers has arrived, great Paganini's come.

So wonderful, exorbitant, so frightful, so romantic, Sirs.

The World of Music, at his mighty presence are struck dumb.



So firm his touch, so fine his stop, every one must own his sway,  
 Great King of Cat-gut! *Agitato!* presto! who but he, *Sirs*;  
*Mori*, *Spagnoletti*, now must second Fiddle play, *Sirs*.  
 Glory be to Tweedledum! Success to Tweedledee! *Sirs*.  
 (Repeat the first eight bars as chorus)

—2—

Such golden sounds, he from one string can draw, no sum can pay  
 him, *Sirs*.  
 Germany, France, Italy, combine his fame to puff;  
 The prices must be doubled; all the world crowd to survey him,  
*Sirs*;  
 Four thousand pounds a night to pay him is not half enough.  
 Sixpences, none, after this, must dare call Fiddlers' Money, *Sirs*;  
 Thousands, tens of thousands, must the wond'rous man reward;  
 Johnny Bull must pay for all, though he may think it funny, *Sirs*.  
 Then glory to Hum-strummery, let's shout with one accord.  
 What a hubbub, etc.

—3—

'Tis said he's more than mortal, that he's not a human feature,  
*Sirs*;  
 His eye oblique, his nose awry, his cheeks all marked with scars;  
 And that he kill'd his wife, too, what an interesting creature, *Sirs*;  
 And learnt to play in Prison, as he gaz'd upon the *Bars*.  
 He stayed for seven years, without attempting to escape, *Sirs*,  
 And play'd the Fiddler, all the time, at least 'tis whisper'd so;  
 Though not the only Fiddler that has gone into a *scrape*, *Sirs*,  
 'Tis very clear that he must draw a monstrous good *long Bow*.  
 What a hubbub, etc.

—4—

Whene'er he plays, he goes in fits, his Hearers in Hysterics, too;  
 He such a wond'rous man is, so uncommon and so wild;

There ne'er was such another seen, we ne'er shall such another  
view,

Now playing with his Fiddle, and now playing with his child.  
Throughout the Continent, rare man, he's levied Contributions,  
Sirs;

All flock to hear the great Signor, and render up their Guineas;  
Brutes, wanting Music in their souls, say, but they're worse than  
Russians, Sirs,

That Paganini's followers are all a *Pack o' Ninnies*, Sirs.  
What a hubbub, etc.

—5—

But ah! how shall I tell it, yet it is no tittle tattle, Sirs;  
John Bull was Brute enough at this great Signor's terms to  
storm,

He swore he'd not be clapped in stalls, 'twas so like *Horned Cattle*,  
Sirs,

That the mighty Fiddler's prices must submit to a *Reform*.  
Huzzah for Tweedledum then, and huzzah for Paganini, Sirs.

May he play to some tune still, nor Rosin want to cheer him,  
His Sonatas, far more wond'rous than the Devil's to Tartini,

Long may he live to play, and, oh, long may we live to hear  
him.

What a hubbub, etc.



## VERSES

BY LEIGH HUNT

So played of late to every passing thought  
With finest change (might I but half as well  
So write!) the pale magician of the bow,  
Who brought from Italy the tales made true,  
Of Grecian lyres, and on his sphery hand,  
Loading the air with dumb expectancy,  
Suspended, ere it fell, a nation's breath.

## PAGANINI OF GENOA

He smote—and clinging to the serious chords  
With godlike ravishment, drew forth a breath,  
So deep, so strong, so fervid thick with love,  
Blissful, yet laden as with twenty prayers,  
That Juno yearn'd with no diviner soul  
To the first burthen of the lips of Jove.

The exceeding mystery of the loveliness  
Sadden'd delight; and with his mournful look,  
Dreary and gaunt, hanging his pallid face  
'Twixt his dark and flowing locks, he almost seem'd,  
To feeble or to melancholy eyes,  
One that had parted with his soul for pride,  
And in the sable secret liv'd forlorn.

But true and earnest, all too happily  
That skill dwelt in him serious with its joy;  
For noble now he smote the exulting strings,  
And bade them march before his stately will;  
And now he lov'd them like a cheek, and laid  
Endearment on them, and took pity sweet;  
And now he was all mirth, or all for sense  
And reason, carving out his thoughts like prose  
After his poetry; or else he laid  
His own soul prostrate at the feet of love,  
And with a full and trembling fervour deep,  
In kneeling and close-creeping urgency,  
Implored some mistress with hot tears; which past  
And after patience had brought right of peace,  
He drew as if from thought finer than hope  
Comfort around him in ear-soothing strains  
And elegant composure; or he turn'd  
To heaven instead of earth, and raised a prayer  
So earnest-vehement, yet so lowly sad,

Mighty with want and all poor human tears,  
That never saint, wrestling with earthly love,  
And in mid-age unable to get free,  
Tore down from heaven such pity.



“FAREWELL TO ONE WHOSE LIKE WE SHALL NEVER  
HEAR AGAIN”

BY CHORLEY

*(Published in the “Athenæum”)*

O Paganini!—most undoubted king  
Of St. Cecilia’s flock, alive or dead,  
Whether their pasture be of pipe, or string,  
Or mighty organ, which doth overspread  
Ancient Cathedral aisles with flood of sound,—  
In all the wizard craft, matured by labour,  
That doth the spirit move, delight, astound,  
Thou hast no peer—thou hast not even a neighbour  
In the long lapse of years from Tubal Cain to Weber.

Sages have said, who read the book of night,  
That once each hundred years some meteor flares  
Across the startled heavens with brilliant flight,  
Making strange tumults in the land of stars;  
And, ’mid the realm of constellations vast,  
In steady splendour ever rolling on,  
Sweeps far and wide with fierce and furious haste,  
Rushing from pole to distant pole anon;  
And, like the monarch’s ghost—“ ’Tis here—’tis there—’tis  
gone!”

Thou dost to these, the meteor-born, belong,  
O mighty monarch of the strings and bow!

And though it were to do sweet Cupid wrong  
To call thee else like him—yet on thy bow,  
And in thy curved lips and flashing eyes,  
His clearest seal hath god-like Genius set,  
Who bade thee from the common herd arise  
And win thyself a crown—nor ever yet  
Hath Art her votary graced with brighter coronet.

O that a stately temple might be reared  
On some wide plain—and open to the sky—  
Where all the great, the gifted, the revered  
Side close to side, ensepulchred might lie!  
And there, where many a breeze at evening's close  
In solemn dirge around their tomb should sweep,  
Should all the sons of melody repose,  
That pilgrims from afar might come and weep,  
And by their sainted dust a silent vigil keep.

And there together in renown should rest,  
The Italian minstrel of the broken heart!\*

And he whose Requiem for a spirit blest  
Was his own dirge—too early lost Mozart!  
And he of the Messiah—and the flight  
Of Israel's children from their bonds abhorred,  
When God was cloud by day, and fire by night!  
And he, who sung of darkness, at one word  
Bursting to light—and Earth created by its Lord!

And many more—with whom ungentle Time  
Forbids my weak and wandering verse to say;  
Save one great master-spirit, whom my rhyme  
Must pause to honour—for the meteor ray  
Burnt with intensest radiance o'er his head;  
Albeit too soon within his eager ear

\* Pergolesi.

The realm of sound deep silence overspread,  
Whom yet the world is learning to revere—  
Beethoven! he should sleep with thee—the Wizard—near!

There's left a space, beside his hallowed dust,  
For thee with whom began my feeble song;  
But be it long before the encroaching rust  
Of Time wear out thy energies—and long  
Ere the grim Tyrant with resistless call  
Beckon thee hence—before thy bow be hung  
In some gray chapel—and thy brethren all  
Strive for thy magic instruments unstrung;  
If Heaven were kind to man, thou shouldst be ever young!



## PAGANINI

Anonymous

He shambled awkward on the stage, the while  
Across the waiting audience broke a smile.  
With clumsy touch he drew the bow,  
He snapped the string, the audience tittered low.  
Again he tries, off flies another string;  
With laughter now the circling galleries ring.  
Once more, the third string breaks its quivering strands,  
And hisses greet the player where he stands,  
Alone and calm, his genius unbereft,  
One string and Paganini left.  
He plays, the one string's daring notes arise,  
Against that storm, as if they sought the skies.  
A silence falls, then awe, the people bow,  
And they who first had hissed are weeping now,  
And when the last notes, quivering, died away,  
Some shouted "Bravo," some had learned to pray.



## WINTER-GEDICHT

(in part)

BY FRIEDRICH AUGUST KANNE

Seht ihr, wie er hernieder steigt  
 Zum Saal, von seinen breiten Stufen?  
 Und kaum vernimmt er frohes Rufen,  
   Als funkelnd sich sein Auge zeigt!  
 Das lange schwarze Haar bewegt  
 Sich, an den Schultern sanft geregt,  
 Und kaum besteigt er seinen Thron,  
 Von dem die Herzen er regieret:  
 Als sich kein Athemzug mehr rühret,  
 Denn Alles lauscht dem *Göttersohn!*

Und als den Bogen er ergreift,  
 Steigt, wie ein Pfeil nach Himmelshöhen,  
 Wo kaum ein Aug' ihn kann ersehen,  
   Sein Zauberton empor, und streift  
 Des Aethers Wolken sanft am Rande;  
 Dann sinkt er, wie an einem Bande,  
   Leis' zitternd, auf die Erd' herab;  
 Und hüpf't in leichten Silberwellen,  
 Die endlich bis zum Sturm anschwellen,—  
 Und rieselt sterbend dann in's Grab.

Nun klagt er seiner Liebe Schmerz,—  
 So wie ein König, zu den Füßen  
 Der Schönheit schmachtet heiss nach Küssen,—  
   Und mit ihm klaget jedes Herz.  
 Und wie er die Gewährung ahnet,  
 Sein Geist den Adlerfittig mahnet;  
   Da schwingt er jubelnd sich empor,

Dann scherzt er, flatternd mit den Schwingen,  
So wie ein Heer von Schmetterlingen,  
Die tanzen an des Gartens Thor.

Und wer fragt um den Namen noch,  
Der *Paganini* je belauschte,  
Und hörte, wie sein Bogen rauschte,  
Wenn er sich schwang in Sternen hoch?  
Hat doch auch der mit ihm geweinet  
Dem nur das Wissen gross erscheint!

Ja, ihm entgegen jauchzte Wien,  
Ihm jauchzten Männer nach und Frauen,  
Weil sie noch einmal wollten schauen  
Den, dessen Spiel ein Wunder schien.

Und denen Neid im Herzen quoll,  
Die mussten still sich drein ergeben;  
Als sie ihn sahn so hoch erheben,  
War ihnen selbst die Brust doch voll.  
Von Freud' und Wonne!—Ja die Geister,  
Die werden ihrer Mitwelt Meister,  
Was halb ist, schwindet dann wie Rauch;  
Glanz geben in der Kunst nur Sonnen,  
Der Monden Licht ist schnell zerronnen,—  
Doch ihn preist jeder Lebenshauch.

Und jene, die mit blindem Wahn  
Sich gegen Wälschlands Lied verbunden,  
Weil die Geographie gefunden:  
Ein Wälscher sei kein Deutscher Mann;  
Die thaten hier recht wohl daran,  
Dass sie sich Schönes liessen munden:  
Denn wer ein Herz im Busen trägt,  
Der spottet ob des Neides Hadern,  
Dem sagt's der Pulsschlag in den Adern,  
Ob sich ein Gott in Künstler regt?

After Paganini's first concert F. C. Weidmann had the following lines printed in the *Wiener Zeitschrift*

Was rauschen dort für Harmonien  
 Des Saales weiten Raum entlang?  
 Wer weckt dies Reich von Melodien  
 Aus einer dürft 'gen Saite Klang?  
 Wer ist's, der mit dem Zauberbogen  
 Das Herz mit süßem Ton uns rührt,  
 Und brausend, wie auf Bergstroms Wogen,  
 Zu der Begeist'ung Gipfel führt?  
 Es ist der Priester der Camöne,  
 Den sie zum Liebling sich erwählt,  
 Dass er, ein Fürst im Reich der Tön  
 Den Geist bewährt, der sie beseelt!  
 Ihn führte seiner Göttin Walten  
 Als würd'gen Gast auf deutsche Flur  
 In seiner Kunst uns zu entfalten  
 Den Zauber doppelter Natur.  
 Ihn, der Thuiskons Ernst und Milde  
 Ital'scher Glut zu ein'gen weiss,  
 Der spielend herrscht, und herrschend spielt  
 Ihn krönt des Doppellorber Preis.



The following are acrostics taken from the *Theaterzeitung* of Vienna. The first is by A. Micheli Pellegrini

**P** enetrator dei cuori  
**A** arco, the d'armonia così discocca  
**G** li strali, qual suol folgore gli ardori:  
**A** gghiaccia, poi qual neve allor che fiocca:  
**N** on così bella splende  
**I** ride in ciel, ne così varia scende  
**N** e' campi primavera, quanto è grato  
**I** n udirne il bel suono innamorato.

By A. Giftschütz, Vienna (April 20th, 1828)

**P** rincipe dei Virtuosi,  
**A** lto Genio senza pari,  
**G** emma unica che splende  
**A** l felice che l'intende.  
**N** on il cuore, anzi l' alma  
**I** ncantar, rapire sa;  
**N** on acquista già la palma,  
**I** mmortallizarsi sa.

By A. Tevini de Monte Cemilio

**P** lettro celeste! al cui suon conquiso  
**A** ltro accordo si tace; arride l' etra  
**G** iovial è ascolta; i fluti l' Istro arretra;  
**A** l silenzio diresti è un cheto Eliso.

**N** ume solo esser può dal ciel diviso,  
**I** nviato a dar vita a mortal cetra:  
**N** on uom colui, ch' i cor molce, penetra,  
**I** nvola e li trasmette in paradiso.

**N** on isdegnar de' Teutoni gli Evviva,  
**I** nclito di Delo! i còliti onori  
**C** ompagni ti saranno all' adria riva.

**O** ve ti volgi, il tramite di fiori  
**L** eggi segnar: Sorte, ch' è tua captiva,  
**O** ltraggiar ti può, i crin, non già gli allori.



# HYMN OF PRAISE TO PAGANINI

(Last three stanzas)

BY KASPAR

Hinaus will ich zu Gottes Schöpfung wallen  
 Und knie'n im Tempelhaus der heil'gen Nacht,

Wo durch der Thränenweiden grüne Hallen  
 Des Mondes Antlitz stille Wehmuth lacht;  
 Und hör' ich leise Sphärenklänge schallen,  
 Dann, Lieber, hab' ich Deines Sang's gedacht,  
 Der sanft herüber weht von Leichensteinen,  
 Und jedes Herz erschüttert bis zum Weinen.

Doch bald enthüpften Deines Bogens Spitze  
 Des *Frohsinns* heit're Töne, schmerzend leicht  
 Gleich wie von gold'ner Schnur im Farbenblitze  
 Demanten eines Zaub'ers Finger streicht;  
 Sie glüh'n verschlungen, wie am Rosensitze  
 Den Grazien Amor traut die Hände reicht!  
 Bald hör ich Schmelz-Accorde zitternd schweben,  
 Wie von dem Luftkuss Silberblüthen beben.

Und fröhlich wandle ich mit meinen Traum  
 Und Deiner Kunst in einem schönen Thal,  
 Viel tausend Blümchen lächeln in den Räumen,  
 Hierscherzt der Quell, dort braust der Wasserfall,  
 Viel tausend Vögeln singen auf den Bäumen,  
 Und wecken in der Brust den Wiederhall,  
 Ich lausch' enzückt den süßen Brautgesängen,  
 Die mir voll Anmuth fast das Herz zersprengen.



From "*Das Wunderhorn*"

*Morganblatt* December 21st, 1829

Ein Druck von seinem Finger,  
 Und diese Glocken all'  
 Sie geben süßen Schall,  
 Wie nie ein Harfonklang  
 Und keiner Frauen Sang,  
 Kein Vogel obenher,  
 Die Jungfrau nicht im Meer  
 Nie so was geben kann.

## AN RITTER PAGANINI

By J. N. K.—M. M.

—I—

Bringt mir so Helm als Lanze  
Zu muthigem Turnei,  
Zu kühnem Waffentanze  
Bringt Schild und Schwert herbei!

Bin ich denn Ritter worden  
In wundersamem Land,  
Seit mir in den Accorden  
So Erd' als Hölle schwand?

Seit sich die Himmelspforten  
Der Kunst mir aufgethan,  
Schau' ich an allen Orten  
Nur Einen Rittersmann.

Ich möcht', ein Ritter, reiten  
Zu lust 'gem Kunstturnei,  
Ich möcht' in Tönen streiten  
In Tönen kühn und frei.

Ei lasst uns singen, sagen  
Vom hohen Rittersmann,  
Ihr Sänger! lasst uns wagen,  
Ein Lied zu heben an!

Ein Lied, ein jubelnd Preisen  
Dir, Klang- und Sanges-Held!—  
Von *Paganini's* Weisen  
Durchtön' es Stadt und Feld!



## PAGANINI OF GENOA

Jedweder Mund mag melden,  
 Jedwedes Auge sag':  
 Wie er, der Held der Helden,  
 Herauf führt hellsten Tag!

Wie er der Erde Dünste  
 Der Hölle grause Macht  
 Durch Himmels-Wunderkünste  
 Zu Schanden hat gemacht!

—2—

Ich weiss ein Wunderbergwerk,  
 Das birgt viel Edelstein;  
 Doch dringen wen'ge Knappen  
 In seine Tiefen ein.

In seinen Tiefen funkelt's  
 In seinen Tiefen rollt's,  
 Und von krystall'nen Wänden  
 Helltönend wiederhallt's.

Des Busens Tiefen sind es,  
 Die thut mein Wort euch kund  
 Wo wen'ge niedersteigen  
 In seinen reichsten Grund.

Doch Du bist eingefahren  
 Mit rüst'gem Knappenlauf,  
 Und aus den Tiefen klang es  
 "Zum Licht! Glück auf! Glück auf!"

—3—

Der Frühling ist erstanden!  
 In buntem Zauberkleid  
 Durchwandert er die Auen;  
 Jedwedes Herz wogt weit.

Wogt weit in heller Freude;  
Das Auge blinkt und winkt,  
Dieweil Dein zaub'risch Walten  
Mild auf uns niedersinkt.

Und Blumen streust Du nieder;  
Es tönet die Schalmei;  
Von Schmerzen und von Klagen  
Jedwedes Herz wird frei.

—4—

Es klagt in mächt'gen Tönen  
Ein düst'rer Rittersmann,  
Schaut nur im Trauerkleide  
Berg', Au' und Wälder an.

Es liegt die Welt so öde  
Vor seinem dunkeln Blick;  
Starrt trostlos in die Weite,  
Sucht das verklungne Glück.

Da lacht er ob der Wehen,  
Da lacht er ob dem Leid;  
So steht er fest, ein Felsen  
In rüst'ger Männlichkeit.

Ach' wohl im tiefsten Grame  
Lacht auf manch Menschenherz,  
Und springt, wie lust'ge Buben,  
Und überspringt den Schmerz.

So hast Du Schmerz und Freuden  
Geleitet Hand an Hand,  
So hast Du klagend und scherzend  
Geführt in's Zauberland!



## PAGANINI OF GENOA

One of the poems which fluttered down on his head at the Munich concert which was attended by the Royal Family.

**P** hantastisch fährt dein Spiel empor  
**A** us diesen kleinen Saitenholz,  
**G** estalten schwirren d'raus hervor,  
**A** ls steigen kühn und ernst und stolz  
**N** achtgeister auf bei Feensang,  
**I** n nie geseh'ner Tänze Reigen  
**N** ach nie gehörter Weisen Klang  
**I** hr schaurig Weben uns zu zeigen.



## PAGANINI

By Franz Grillparzer (Vienna, 1828)

Du wärest ein Mörder nicht? Selbstmörder du!  
 Was öffnest du des Busens stilles Haus,  
 Und stösst sie aus, die unverhüllte Seele,  
 Und wirfst sie hin, den Gaffern eine Lust?  
 Stösst mit dem Dolch nach ihr und triffst;  
 Und klagst und weinst,  
 Und zählst mit Tränen ihre blut'gen Tropfen?  
 Dann aber höhnt du sie und dich,  
 Brichst spottend aus in gellendes Gelächter!  
 Du wärest kein Mörder? Frevler du am Ich,  
 Des eignen Leibs, der eignen Seele Mörder!  
 Und auch der meine—doch ich weich' dir aus!



## NACH PAGANINIS KONZERT

by

De la Motte Fouqué (Berlin, 1829)

Die Sagen, die mir einst im Innern schliefen,  
 Zum Teil seither ans Tageslicht gedrungen,  
 Zum Teil von süßem Halbtraum noch umschlungen,—  
 Sie tönten all', als Deine Saiten riefen.

Du bist ein Zubermeister ob den Tiefen,  
 Drin Klänge ruh'n, kaum je noch angeklungen!  
 Den mag'schen Bogen hast Du kühn geschwungen,  
 Und Meere brüllen, und Segenswolken triefen.

Welch ein Mysterium sich vor Deinen Wettern,  
 Vor Deinem Zittern, Deinen süßen Klagen  
 Erschliessen soll,—welch kühner Geist ermisst es?  
 Du selbst ermisst es nicht. Jedoch im Schmettern  
 Der Donner tönt's, tönt leis im holden Zagen;  
 Du suchst ein Heils-Juwel, ein längst vermisstes!



## PAGANINI

by

Karl von Holtei (Berlin, March, 1829)

Du düst'rer Mann in Märchen eingehüllt  
 Die vor Dir her sich wundersam gestalten,  
 Die finst're Stirn' von Lorbern überfüllt,  
 Beherrscher Du, dämonischer Gewalten;  
 Was willst Du hier, mit Deinem heissen Schmerz,  
 Mit den zerriss'nen, räthselhaften Klängen,  
 Mit nie gehörten zaub'rischen Gesängen,  
 Mit Deinem schauerlichen, wilden Scherz,  
 Mit Deiner Geige strehenden Accorden;—  
 Was willst Du hier bei uns? Wir sind im Norden;  
 Uns fließt das Blut gemassigt in den Adern,  
 Nur die Vernunft regiert uns Herz und Hand;  
 Wir müssen wohl mit Deiner Keckheit hadern,  
 Denn unsern Richterstuhl ziert der Verstand,  
 Und sanft umglänzt von reinem Sonnenstrahle,  
 Seh'n wir im Geist die reinen Ideale,  
 Und legen auch an Dich, du fremder Mann,  
 Den wohlgeprüften, strengen Mass-stab an.

Da nimmst Du spöttisch Deinen leichten Bogen,—  
Es ist kein Bogen mehr, ein Zauberstab!  
Und wider Willen, von Dir fortgezogen,  
Schweigt der Verstand, der sich gefangen gab.

Du regst der Seele Tiefen, rufst ein Sehnen  
Aus stillem Busen an das Licht hervor;  
Wir glauben Dir, wir bringen uns're Thränen,  
Da trifft ein Misslaut das bewegte Ohr;—  
Du spielst mit uns wie mit den bunten Tönen,  
Du ziehst uns an, Du stössest uns zurück,  
Und Deine Kunst will uns nicht mehr versöhnen,  
Aus Deinen Klängen spricht kein heit'res Glück.  
Gewalt'ge Klagen Deines eig'nen Lebens  
Vernehmen wir aus dieser Meisterschaft:  
Du stehst am Ziele jedes ird'schen Strebens,  
Doch ohne Freude scheint die Riesenkraft.

So blickt der Wand'rer von den schroffen Höhen  
In's Felsenthal, das einst ein Strom zerriss,  
Wie wir vor Dir mit bangem Staunen stehen,  
Dich hören uns'rer selbst noch ungewiss.  
Noch ungewiss, ob wir denn auch erleben,  
Was jedem Hörer ganz unmöglich scheint.—  
Und selbst wenn Deine Flötentöne beben,  
Hör' ich den Geist "der immerdar verneint!"

O gebe Dir Apoll' der Seele Frieden,  
Hygeia nahe Dir, Du kranker Mann,  
Die Wonne, die Du Tausenden beschieden,  
Sie läch'le Dich mit frischen Wangen an,  
Und von den Blumen, die wir gern Dir streuen,  
Mög' eine blüh'n, Dich friedlich zu erfreuen.



MADRIGAL

by Joseph Rosalinde de Raucher Henri Sappia

De tous les amphyon qu'Apollon nous montra  
Paganini le Grand est le ne plus ultra.



## APPENDIX "B"

### NECROLOGY

by

FRANZ LISZT

Published in the *GAZETTE MUSICALE* of August 23rd, 1830

The flame of Paganini's life is extinguished; with him vanished one of those wonders which Nature seems to bestow upon us only to reclaim it as hastily as possible—a miracle which the kingdom of art has seen but once.

The unattainable, unsurpassable greatness of his genius frightens even those who try to follow in his footsteps. None will succeed him, none may be called his equal in fame. His name will never be mentioned in connection with another. For what artist's fame has enjoyed such unclouded sunlight; who is his equal, in the enthusiastic and undivided opinion of the world, as ruler in the kingdom of art?

As Paganini, forty years old, after he had wrung from his talent the greatest conceivable perfection, appeared in public, the world wonderingly looked upon him as a super-being. The excitement he caused was so unusual, the magic that he practiced upon the fantasy of his hearers, so powerful that they could not satisfy themselves with a natural explanation. Old tales of witches and ghost stories came into their minds; they tried to explain the wonder of his playing from out of his past, to fathom the marvel of his genius in a super-normal way; they even whispered that he had dedicated his soul to the Evil One and that the fourth string of his violin was made of his wife's intestine which he himself had cut out.

He travelled all through Europe. Everywhere the enthusiastic crowds, enchanted by his playing, paved his way with gold. Other instrumental artists considered it the greatest possible honor to be given Paganini's name. There existed Paganinis of the piano, bass-violin and guitar. Violinists did their utmost to discover his secret. In the sweat of their brows they labored over the difficulties that he playfully created, without becoming any more famous for their efforts; the public gave them nothing but a sympathetic smile. So Paganini's ambition, if he had any, enjoyed the rare luck of being permitted to wander in unattainable heights without being troubled by injustice or indifference. Not even his descent into the grave was clouded by the troublesome shadow of an heir to his fame. But who that has not himself witnessed it will believe that this talent to whom the world lavishly offered what it so often refuses greatness: fame and fortune; that this man, who created so much enthusiasm, could make no friends among his fellowmen? No one guessed what was going on in his heart; his own richly blessed life never made another happy; no union of spirit or heart ever bound him to an earthly brother; he remained strange to every inclination, to every passion, strange even to his own genius, for what is genius other than a mediator between God and man? Paganini's god, however, was never any other than his own gloomy, sad "I."

Only timidly and unwillingly do I speak these hard words. Because I know that whether one finds fault with the dead or praises the living one must always expect poor thanks. There follows, under the pretext that the grave must be respected, on the lie of an unbeliever in his judgment of a person, the cheating of an apotheosis and then one proceeds to perform regular deeds of charity in order to weaken the accusations. Yet what are single cases against the proof of a whole life? It is just as hard for a human being to do only bad as it is to do only good. From this fact I propose the question wherein I use the word egotism, not in its actual, but in a broader sense, and rather in connection with

the artist than with the man: is it unreasonable to see as Paganini's starting point as well as his goal simply his own cold egotism?

Be that as it may—peace to his memory! He was great. Every great man carries his own burden within himself. Do we know at what price he purchased his greatness? Will the gap that Paganini's death has caused soon close again? Are the main and the lesser motives to which he owed his ruling position—which I gladly acknowledge—such that they may repeat themselves? Will the regal dignity of his art, which he himself succeeded in conquering, pass into other hands? Will there ever be a second artist-king?

I say it without hesitation that no second Paganini will ever be. The wonderful meeting of such a mighty talent with circumstances so adaptable to an apotheosis will remain a singularity in the history of art. Should an artist of the present day try, like Paganini, to surround himself intentionally with an air of mystery and to astonish his listeners, he would no longer cause surprise; and the memory of Paganini would, even though he possess a marvelous talent, brand him as a charlatan and plagiarist. Aside from this, the audience today demands of a favorite artist something entirely different and only an entirely opposite path to that which Paganini followed could win similar fame and power.

The artist who feels that he possesses the strength to strive to become Paganini's heir is faced with but one problem: not to consider art as a convenient means to a selfish end and to obtain unfruitful fame, but as a sacred power that concerns and influences humanity; to develop his own life to such a high degree that it may be an ideal to talent; to bring to the understanding of other artists what they should and can do; to influence the public opinion by the superiority which a noble and high-minded life will instill and to waken and nourish in the hearts of the people the enthusiasm for beauty which is so closely related to goodness.

This task is difficult but not impossible. There is a wide path open to every endeavor and everyone who dedicates his art to

the sacred service of a conviction and a recognition may be certain of a sympathetic understanding.

We all divine a change in our social conditions and relations. Without wanting to exaggerate the artist's meaning for this and without, as is so often done, wishing to explain his mission in high-sounding words, we still believe that we may be firmly convinced that Providence also allotted to him a part of this noble work.

May the artist of the future gladly and readily decline to play the conceited and egotistical rôle, which we hope has in Paganini had its last brilliant representative; may he set his goal within, and not outside of, himself and be the means of virtuosity and not its purpose. May he constantly keep in mind that, though the saying is *Noblesse oblige*, in far higher degree than nobility: *Génie oblige*.

## APPENDIX "C"

### PAGANINI'S SECRET

Like the coming of the Messiah, Paganini's "secret" divides his followers into two groups—those to whom it has already been revealed and those who are looking for some document to turn up which will, at a glance, revolutionize the technique of violin study. Periodically, musicians searching among unpublished documents think they have discovered the magic word that will abolish long years of drudgery, that will transmute talent into genius in ten easy lessons.

Paganini promised to reveal his secret before his death in a STUDY FOR VIOLIN, which would be brief but astounding. If he ever wrote such a pamphlet, it still remains with his unpublished works in the possession of the Paganini family. It is probable that he intended to write it, but never actually did.

The secret, however, did not die with him. Carl Guhr heard him in Frankfort and was so impressed that he determined to solve the mystery. He questioned Paganini and, getting no satisfactory reply, he attended his concerts frequently, keeping his eyes and ears open. The result was PAGANINI'S ART OF PLAYING THE VIOLIN, an accurate analysis of Paganini's method. Guhr goes into minute detail of the tuning, strings, position, and manner of bowing, giving concrete examples.

Briefly, he reduced the great secret to the following facts:—

Paganini employs thin strings; his bridge is somewhat flatter than usual, enabling him to touch three strings at a time; he tunes his instrument in a special manner; his position and his manner of holding the violin differ from that of other violinists;



he holds the bow near the middle, which gives it a whipping action; he indulges in frequent pizzicato with the left hand.

The altered tuning of the violin was what mystified violinists for it enabled Paganini to produce harmonics on open strings in notes which ordinarily would have to be covered.

Arthur Hartmann says: "I think the so-called secret of Paganini was this:—There is one thing that controls the world of art—the brain. Paganini did not need endless hours of practice because he practiced with concentration. Twenty minutes of concentrated practice are equal to two hours of playing with one's eyes on the wall paper. He learned concentration in his study of the guitar. That instrument demands that the eyes be kept on the finger-board. His study of the guitar with its large frets also developed his reach and the strength of his fingers."

It has often been said that Paganini had unusually long fingers. This was as much of an optical illusion as his great height. F. Schütz, who became acquainted with Paganini in Leipzig, writes:—

"It is generally believed that Paganini has hands with abnormally long fingers. This is an error, because his hands are entirely in proportion to the rest of his body; indeed they are rather smaller than normal, but very thin and the fingers are unusually wide apart. . . ."

Paganini's secret is as variable as truth, and many explanations have been offered from numerous sources. Dr. Bennatti submitted in 1831 to the Academy of Paris a Physiological Notice in which he attributes Paganini's skill to a body deformed to the specific needs of his instrument.

"Who can, for example," he asks, "in order to produce certain effects almost cross his elbows over his breast? And could one do this if he were as fat as Rossini and not as thin as Paganini? . . . Where does one find such a piece of natural luck as that the left shoulder is an inch higher than the other? . . . And then the flexibility of the capsular ligaments of both shoulders, the relaxa-



tion of the muscular cords that connect the wrist with the forearm, also the carpals and meta-carpals and the phalanges with each other. . . . The hand is no larger than a normal one but because of the flexibility of all its joints its reach might be doubled. Thus, for instance, he gives to the first phalanges of the fingers of his left hand, on the strings, the remarkable flexion which, while his hand remains motionless, moves them laterally to their natural flexion, and this with ease, precision and rapidity. . . . The art of Paganini rests with his natural physical gifts which he used and developed by untiring practice. The cerebellum is abnormally large. His sense of hearing is astonishingly developed. He hears even whispering at a great distance and the sensitivity of his tympanum is such that he actually experiences pain when one speaks loudly near him. . . . The effect is stronger on the left ear, which is nearer the violin. His ears are particularly well built and adapted for the reception of the sound waves."

Perhaps Dr. Bennatti has reversed cause and effect and the raised shoulder and acute hearing are the result of his playing.

The Doctor, who knew Paganini for many years and treated him in Vienna and in Paris, went into detail on the subject of Paganini's left ear and thence into the less definite realm of his soul.

Thin strings or a thin body, long hours of practice, fingers hardened by a guitar, an elevated shoulder blade or a debased soul—any or all of these things, or none of them, can explain Paganini's secret.



### CAST OF PAGANINI'S RIGHT HAND

His fingers were not longer than the average as was supposed, but the joints were loose and flexible and the thumb ideally constructed for bowing.

(Courtesy of The Strad Publishing Co., London.)



## APPENDIX "D"

### PAGANINI AS COMPOSER

Whatever diablerie Paganini exhibited in his performances, his compositions are sound music, and excepting the technical difficulties, rather conservative in character.

If he had written nothing but the *Caprices*, he would still have claim to a significant place as a composer of violin music.

In a preface to his edition of the *Twenty-four Caprices* Florizel von Reuter says:—

"The 24 Caprices for violin without accompaniment constitute Nicolo Paganini's Opus 1 and belong to the few works of the Italian king of violinists which appeared in print during the lifetime of their composer. (The exact number of these edited compositions being five.)

"When the caprices first attracted the attention of the public, under the title 'Ventiquattro caprici per violino solo, dedicati agli artisti da Nicolo Paganini,' the general opinion was that they were unplayable, until the author himself succeeded in convincing the music world, through his remarkable performances, of the error of this supposition. The caprices are (apart from the two violin-concertos in D-major and B-minor) Paganini's most important work and are not to be placed upon the same level with the numerous conventional themes with variations (such as *The Witches' Dance*, *Moses*, *I Palpiti*, *Non piu mesta*, etc.) which Paganini, in later days, following the custom of the time, composed for the less cultured portion of his audiences, thereby creating a furore with the great public.

"The fount of Paganini's inspiration is not to be sought in

such more or less superficial virtuoso pieces, in spite of the many interesting technical problems they present to the student.

"The caprices, on the other hand, reveal such a wealth of pedagogic lore, coupled with such inexhaustible fantasy and poetical romance that they may be considered as a convincing proof of Paganini's worth as a musician and composer. . . .

"They are so seldom played, however, owing to their great difficulty, that they are scarcely known and most violinists who perform them are too busy surmounting their technical difficulties to pay adequate attention to their real beauty . . . to perform Paganini's caprices correctly the player must be both virtuoso and musician.

"Such caprices as No. 4, with its purely symphonical form, No. 6, melancholy, gloomy tremolo, No. 9, cheerful, pastoral and sylvan romance, No. 13, impish, teasing laughter in thirds, No. 19, soulful dialogue between the E-string and the lower strings, No. 21, amorous Italian lyricism, and finally No. 24, of which the symphonic theme and genial variations provoked the unqualified praise of Brahms; these many fanciful pictures, so full of imagination and poetry, prove conclusively that Paganini, the wizard of the violin, was also a musician in the æsthetic sense of the word."

There are violinists who feel that the Caprices are the product of a mature period but that Paganini called them Opus 1 to reflect greater credit on himself.

Paganini's influence on succeeding violinists is easily traced. Ernst in his *Concerto Pathétique* and in various fantasies and variations exceeded him in acrobatics; Mendelssohn made use of the famous Paganini *staccato volante* in his concerto, and Vieuxtemps, Lalo, Saint-Saëns, Sarasate and Wieniawski were indebted more or less to their great predecessor.

Of equal significance is the influence Paganini exerted on the mechanics of the piano. Liszt in his transcriptions of the *Caprices* enlarged the technical possibilities of the piano and re-shaped the piano hand; Schumann, more than anyone, recognized the poetic

quality of the violinist, and the thoughtful Brahms made good use of the slender theme of the twenty-fourth *Caprice*. The Brahms-Paganini *Variations* are still the delight and despair of pianists.

Even in the larger fields of chamber and orchestral music such men as Berlioz, Wagner, Tschaikowski, Rimski-Korsakoff, Ravel, Dukas and Casella have made generous use of the Paganini technique.

"Paganini," says Morris Nathan, "with the ultimate purpose of achieving the impossible on the violin, has been instrumental in enlarging the technical possibilities of the solo, ensemble and orchestral forces and can also be held largely responsible for the virtuoso accomplishments of today."



#### PAGANINI COMPOSITIONS

(Stars indicate that the compositions are either lost or unpublished.)

1. Op. 1 Twenty-four Caprices, for violin alone (dedicated to all artists).
2. Op. 2 Six Sonatas, for violin and guitar.
3. Op. 3 Six Sonatas, for violin and guitar.
4. Op. 4 Three Grand Quartets, for violin, viola, violoncello and guitar.
5. Op. 5 Three Grand Quartets, for the same.
6. Op. 6 Concerto, No. 1, in E flat (D), for violin and orchestra.
7. Op. 7 Concerto, No. 2, in B minor, for the same.
8. Op. 8 "Le Streghe." Introduction and Variations.
9. Op. 9 "God Save the King." Variations.
10. Op. 10 "Carnaval de Venise." Variations.
11. Op. 11 "Allegro de Concert." "Moto Perpetuo."
12. Op. 12 "Non piu mesta." Introduction and Variations.



13. Op. 13 "Di tanti palpiti." Introduction and Variations.  
(All for violin and orchestra.)
14. Op. 14 Sixty Studies in Variation form, on the Air "Barucaba," for violin alone.
15. Bravura Variations on a theme from Rossini's "Moses in Egypt," for violin and string quartet, or pianoforte.
16. Introduction and Variations on the Theme, "Nel cor piu non mi sento," for violin alone.
17. Duo in C, for one violin. Solo.
- \*18. Fifteen Quartets, for violin, viola, violoncello and guitar.
- \*19. Dramatic Sonata, "The Storm," for violin and orchestra
- \*20. Military Sonata, on Mozart's "Non piu andrai."
- \*21. Napoleon Sonata for the fourth string.
- \*22. Sonata di un Canto Appassionata, e variazioni sopra un Tema Marziale. For fourth string.
- \*23. Sonata with variations on a Theme from Jos. Weigl's "L'Amor Marinaro."
- \*24. Sonata Amorosa Galante, e Tema con variazioni.
- \*25. Sonata for viola and orchestra.
- \*26. Sonata Sentimentale.
- \*27. Sonata, "Varsovie."
- \*28. Chant of the Monks of the Monastery of St. Bernard.
- \*29. "La Primavera," sonata for violin alone.
- \*30. Cantabile e Valse.
- \*31. Three duos, violin and violoncello
32. Pot-Pourri, Introduction, Variations and Finale.
33. "St. Patrick's Day." Variations.
34. Sonatina e Polacchetta con variazioni.
35. Polacca with Variations.
36. "Maria Luisa." Sonata for the G string.
37. "Tarantella." Brilliant Fantasy.
- \*38. Balletto campestre. Variations on a comical theme.
- \*39. Cantabile, violin and pianoforte.
40. Tre Quartetti per due Violini, Viola e Violoncello.

41. "Chant patriotique" for one voice with chorus and piano-forte.
42. "Ghiribizzi" (Sketches) per Chitarra a sei cordo, 43 small pieces for guitar.
43. Chitarra Marziale (E major).
44. Short March (E major) with a trio (A major) for guitar.
45. Minuet for guitar (A major), dedicated to Signorina Dida.
46. Minuetto Umigliato alla Gentilissima Signorina Emiglia Di Negro, for guitar.
47. Small Minuet for guitar (A major); at the end is written in Paganini's questionable Latin: "Finis laus Deo Patris, coronat opus."
48. Thirty-four minuets and thirty-four other small pieces for guitar.
- \*48a. Duets and small pieces for guitar.
49. Four Sonatinas and twelve other small pieces for guitar.
50. Overture of the opera, "Lodovisca," arranged for guitar.
51. "Duetto Amoroso Basso," for violin accompanied by guitar.
52. "Sonata concertata," for guitar and violin, dedicated to Signorina Emiglia Di Negro.
53. Grand Sonata for guitar accompanied by violin.
54. Three books, each containing six sonatas for violin with guitar accompaniment.
55. Six Duets for violin with guitar accompaniment.
56. Serenade for viola, violoncello and guitar, dedicated to Paganini's sister Dominica.
57. Trio concertante for viola, guitar and violoncello (D major).
58. Trio for violin, violoncello and guitar (D major).
59. Two easy pieces for violin and guitar.
60. Concert piece (E major) for orchestra with fagott and horn solo.
61. Ghribizzo vocale (Grille—or sketch—for voice; B major) for soprano with orchestra.

- 62. Sonata in A, for violin, with accompaniment of violin and violoncello.
- 63. Bravura Variations on an original theme, for violin and guitar, or pianoforte.
- 64. Recitative and Variations, on Three Airs, for the fourth string.
- 65. "Le Charme de Padue," Divertissement, for violin and pianoforte.
- \*66. Concerti in D minor.
- \*67. Concerto in two movements. Violin and orchestra.
- \*68. Four Concerti, the scoring unfinished.
- \*69. Concerto, for bassoon, with string trio accompaniment.
- \*70. Fantasia. Violin and orchestra.
- \*71. Sonata on a Theme by Haydn.
- \*72. Sonata for violin alone.
- \*73. Preludio e Fandango, con Variazioni.
- \*74. "La ci darem la Mano," Variations.
- \*75. Polonaise with variations.
- \*76. Cantabile for two strings.
- \*77. "The Vagaries of a Farm Yard."
- \*78. Romance pour le Chant.
- \*79. Fantasia Vocale.
- \*80. Preludio e Rondo brilliant, violin and orchestra.

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